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IMB trustees suspend board member

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP and local reports) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB), meeting in executive session on Nov. 6, voted to censure trustee Wade Burleson of Oklahoma and suspend him from their next four meetings for multiple violations of the trustees' code of conduct.

The censure motion stated that Burleson had "repeatedly failed" to abide by provisions in the code of conduct adopted in March 2006 governing trustee service, including requirements that trustees "refrain from public criticism of Board approved actions" and "scrupulously avoid either the fact or the appearance" of having disclosed information or private conversations from trustees meetings.

The motion also cited requirements that trustees "speak in positive and supportive terms as they interpret and report on actions by the board, regardless of whether they personally support the action" and that trustees "are to refrain from speaking in disparaging terms about IMB personnel and fellow trustees."

Burleson, pastor of Immanuel Church in Enid, Okla., became the focus of controversy in 2005 when he used his blog, Grace and Truth to You, to publicly disagree with actions taken by the board.

In two meetings Nov. 5 with the trustee executive committee and senior board staff, Burleson was asked to apologize for the violations. He reportedly offered to apologize for making disparaging remarks, which he said were unintentional. He refused, however, according to the motion of censure, to apologize for publicly criticizing board actions. Burleson noted that he had voted against the standards of conduct when they were adopted in 2006.



SUSPENDED — International Mission Board trustee chairman John Floyd (right) talks with trustee Wade Burleson after the board's meeting in Springfield, Ill., on Nov. 7. Trustees voted in executive session to censure Burleson and suspend him from four meetings for violations of the trustee code of conduct. (BP photo)



IMB trustee chairman John Floyd said he was deeply saddened at the course events had taken.

"Wade Burleson has shared private conversations with fellow trustees on his blog and with others who are not trustees," Floyd said in a prepared statement. "He has spoken in disparaging terms of his fellow trustees and has persisted in public criticism of board policies for missionary qualifications, adopted by the board in 2005 and reaffirmed by the board in 2007, instead of supporting our policies or, if he has nothing good to say about them, simply remaining silent on the issue."

"As trustee chairman, I have sought to be patient with Brother Burleson and have made efforts to restore him to full and effective service as a trustee without allowing his actions to distract the board from its focus upon the urgent need to take

the Gospel to all the nations," Floyd added.

"Efforts have been made by individual trustees, myself and the trustee executive committee to get him to apologize for his violations of our standards of conduct and to agree to refrain from further violations. It is my great sorrow to report that those efforts have not met with success."

The action taken during executive session was reported out during the trustees' Nov. 7 plenary session in Springfield, Ill.

After the meeting adjourned, Burleson released a handwritten statement that read:

"I shall faithfully fulfill the four-year appointment I have received to serve as a trustee of the International Mission Board. Rachelle [Burleson's wife] and I will gladly pay our own way to attend the IMB trustee meetings, including overseas meetings with missionaries, and we are thrilled that the money saved can be used to support the IMB's overseas mission work."

"I respect my fellow trustees and humbly accept the censure and pray they understand I cannot violate

my Baptist distinctives, particularly the freedom to dissent. I am an IMB trustee but for a season. I am a Southern Baptist for a lifetime. I am a follower of Jesus Christ for eternity."

In a later interview with Associated Baptist Press, Burleson said, "I'm going to be there, I'm going to vote. Whether they count the vote or not ... I can't control that. I believe I represent Southern Baptists; I don't represent my fellow trustees."

The trustee action suspends Burleson "from any active involvement with the board of trustees for at least the next four trustee meetings." It will prohibit his participation in any meetings, business sessions and committee meetings and he will not be reimbursed for expenses incurred if he chooses to attend meetings. The action further provides for a review of his status after those four meetings, with a decision to be made at that time about lifting the suspension.

Burleson's suspension can be reconsidered before the four-meeting time period expires if he apologizes for the violations and promises to work within the board's structure and policies.



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American Christians: feeling secure?

History would seem to indicate that Americans can be quite complacent while the world around them is going up in flames. The fact we are isolated from the rest of the world by two great oceans and unthreatening neighbors to the north and south, has often lulled us into a false sense of security while epochal events unfold in other parts of the world that sooner or later come to engulf us, too.

American Christians often act in the same unfortunate way, as evidenced in the casual and often indifferent manner with which we treat religious persecution in other parts of the world. We need to understand that such persecution could one day engulf us, too.

Son Jong Nam was born into privilege in North Korea. He followed in the footsteps of his father, who rose to the top ranks in the communist regime's powerful and brutal military apparatus. He even became a trusted member of dictator Kim Jong Il's feared personal security detail.

All that changed when his wife made a flippant comment about the country's dictator, the type of harmless remark we hear about our country's leaders every night on

television. No remark about Kim Jong Il is considered harmless in that country, however. An acquaintance informed on her and she was quickly arrested by authorities, who beat her and kicked her in the abdomen until she lost her near-full-term baby.

When his wife died, Son took their other child and fled the country with the aid of a Christian missionary organization. For the first time, Son heard of the love of Jesus Christ and how He was compelled to sacrifice His life for people like Son. He soon made a profession of faith and, emboldened by that newfound faith, made his way back into North Korea to tell his friends and family about the Savior.

In a country where the dictator demands to be worshipped as a god and whose occupants are executed for merely possessing a Bible, Son was quickly brought to the attention of government officials and arrested. He was accused of spying, sentenced to death, and has not been seen or heard from in several months. His whereabouts, if he is still alive, are unknown.

Oscar Elias Biscet is a gifted Cuban physician who was once on his way to the top of Cuba's communist society — but when he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, he refused to perform the routine, primitive abortions that

Fidel Castro's government demanded as a form of population control. He became a human rights activist.

Biscet was first sentenced to prison for three years for "disrespecting patriotic symbols." He is currently serving a 25-year sentence for "acts against the government," confined to a small concrete cell with no natural light. His family reports that he has lost over 60 pounds since his confinement and his teeth have been allowed to rot. His family has been denied permission to provide him food or even talk with him on the telephone.

No one knows how much longer Biscet can endure such cruel mental and physical treatment before his health breaks and his life is threatened, but he steadfastly refuses to renounce his faith or break under the government's mounting pressure.

As awful are the persecutions of these believers, they are but two of many, many thousands of people suffering for their faith today. American Christians wouldn't know about that, as we occupy our time in endless debates about issues that pale in comparison to what's going on in the rest of the world. We are much too comfortable in our cocoon, safe from the world — or so we think.

It could happen to us. Who will speak for those being persecuted today? Who will speak for us tomorrow? Think about it.

GUEST OPINION: *A shocking confession*

By Bob Burney
Columbus, Ohio

rethink all of our old assumptions. Replace it with new insights. Insights that are informed by research and rooted in Scripture. Our dream is really to discover what God is doing and how he's asking us to transform this planet."

Should this be encouraging?

Please note that "rooted in Scripture" still follows "rethink," "new insights" and "informed research." Someone, it appears, still might not get it. Unless there is a return to simple biblical (and relevant) principles, a new faulty scheme will replace the existing one and another generation will follow along as the latest piper plays.

What we should find encouraging, at least, in this "confession" coming from the highest ranks of the Willow Creek Association is that they are coming to realize that their existing "model" does not help people grow into mature followers of Jesus Christ.

Given the massive influence this organization has on the American church today, let us pray that God would be pleased to put structures in place at Willow Creek that foster not mere numeric growth, but growth in grace.

Burney is Salem Communications' host of Bob Burney Live, heard weekday afternoons on WRFD-AM 880 in Columbus, Ohio. This column, which has been edited for length, originally appeared at Townhall.com. Reprinted with permission by Baptist Press.

And no wonder. It seems that the "experts" were wrong.

The report reveals that most of what they have been doing for these many years and what they have taught millions of others to do is not producing solid disciples of Jesus Christ. Numbers yes, but not disciples. It gets worse. Hybels laments:

"Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn't helping people that much. Other things that we didn't put that much money into and didn't put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for."

If you simply want a crowd, the "seeker-sensitive" model produces results. If you want solid, sincere, mature followers of Christ, it's a bust. In a shocking confession, Hybels states:

"We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of

faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become 'self feeders.' We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their Bible between services, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own."

The foundation of thousands of American churches is now discovered to be mere sand. The one individual who has had perhaps the greatest influence on the American church in our generation has now admitted his philosophy of ministry, in large part, was a "mistake." The extent of this 'error defies measurement.'

Perhaps the most shocking thing of all in this revelation coming out of Willow Creek is in a summary statement by Greg Hawkins:

"Our dream is that we fundamentally change the way we do church. That we take out a clean sheet of paper and we

House okays homosexual protection bill

WASHINGTON (BP) -- The U.S. House of Representatives comfortably approved workplace protections based on "sexual orientation" on Nov. 7, handing the homosexual activist movement a ground-breaking victory.

The House's 235-184 vote for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) marked the first time either chamber of Congress has passed such legislation, but it appears unlikely the bill will become law -- at least this year. The White House already has indicated a veto is probable if it reaches President Bush, and the House roll call was more than 40 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed for an override. The Senate has yet to act on the measure.

Barney Frank, an openly homosexual congressman from Massachusetts, is the sponsor of the bill. Bennie Thompson, a Democrat representing the second congressional district in Mississippi, voted in favor of the bill. Republicans Roger Wicker of district one in Mississippi and Chip Pickering of district three in Mississippi voted against the measure, as did Democrat Gene Taylor of district four on Mississippi.

Representatives of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and other pro-family organizations lamented the House action.

"This is a bad bill with bad consequences for our nation," ERLC President Richard Land said, "and I am extremely hopeful, if it were by some strange happenstance to pass the Senate, the president would follow through on his signals to veto this really bad bill."

ENDA would make discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation" illegal in such areas as hiring, firing and compensation for both the private and public workplace.

According to the legislation, "sexual orientation" encompasses "homosexuality, bisexuality or heterosexuality," whether "actual or perceived."

The measure would treat "sexual orientation" in similar fashion to other federally protected categories, such as race, gender, age, and religion.

Some but possibly not all religious organizations are exempted from the bill's requirements, as are the military and businesses with fewer than 15 employees.

Among the reasons the ERLC and others give for opposing the legislation are:

- The bill will establish rights for a category that does not rise to the level of unchangeable traits, which include race and gender.

- It would infringe on the religious rights of some religious-themed businesses, such as Christian bookstores, as well as those of other employers and employees who consider homosexual behavior sinful.

- The measure would open the door to a flood of lawsuits by advocates of homosexuality.

- It could pave the way for the legalization of same-sex marriage.

ENDA, H.R. 3685, establishes a "legal quagmire for employees who practice, or even acknowledge, their religious beliefs -- depending on where they happen to work and subject to judicial interpretation," House Minority Whip Roy Blunt of Missouri said in a written statement.

He called the bill a "clear boon to trial lawyers."

Matt Barber, a policy director at Concerned Women for America, said in a written release ENDA's supporters have "drawn a black line through the free exercise clause of the First Amendment. It's hard to imagine the [founding fathers] agreeing that newfangled 'gay rights,' based on

How Mississippians voted on ENDA

District One: Roger Wicker No	District Three: Chip Pickering No
District Two: Bennie Thompson Yes	District Four: Gene Taylor No

A "Yes" vote is a vote to pass the bill.

No Bibles at Olympics?

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Chinese government seems to be sending mixed messages about religion and religious freedom during the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, and conflicting reports have clouded the issue of the legality of Bibles at the Olympics. The most recent information indicates that Bibles will be allowed at the Olympics, but that each visitor to China will be allowed to bring in only one Bible. On Nov. 2, however, the Catholic News Agency reported that Bibles were among the objects prohibited in the Olympic Village. The CNA story cited the Italian newspaper La Gazzetta dello Sport report that Olympic organizers cited "security reasons" for outlawing any religious symbols at Olympic facilities. Five days later, however, CNA published an updated report indicating that visitors to Beijing are being told to take only one Bible with them into the country. The updated CNA account cited the official policy from the Beijing Olympics website, which clearly states that "Each traveller is recommended to take no more than one Bible into China." An AP story dated Nov. 7 reported that the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) is investigating the matter. According to the story, USOC spokesman Darryl Seibel said the USOC hadn't found anything to indicate that Bibles would be prohibited at the Olympics.

changeable sexual behaviors, should trump the First Amendment."

Land sent a Nov. 6 letter to House Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio to reiterate the ERLC's opposition to ENDA. He also signed on to a letter sent the day before to all House members urging them to vote against the measure.

Among the other 62 signers of that letter were representatives of Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, Exodus International, Alliance Defense Fund, Concerned Women for America, and American Family Association.

Homosexual activist leader Joe Solmonese described the vote as the "making of civil rights history."

"Our fight for equality will not be won overnight," Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), said in a written statement. "It will be won one step at a time, and we will not give up until we reach the finish line. This is a critical piece of legislation and a major step toward the finish line for all Americans."

HRC, the country's largest homosexual activist organization, and others in the movement were displeased the House-approved version did not include protection for transgendered people. Rep. Barney Frank, D.-Mass., the bill's sponsor and an open homosexual, pulled language covering transgenders from the measure in September, saying there was not enough support in the House to pass legislation including such protection.

Transgender is an umbrella term for "people who live all or substantial portions of their lives expressing an innate sense of gender other than their birth sex," according to HRC.

The transgender category includes transsexuals and cross-dressers.

In a floor speech before the vote, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi of California also expressed disappointment the bill did not include transgender protection. Pelosi said, however, she had "looked forward to this day" during her two decades in Congress and called the vote a "joyous occasion."

Looking back

10 years ago

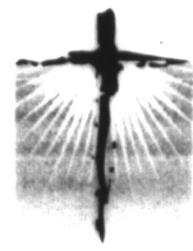
Leaders of Campus Crusade for Christ and the International Mission Board pen an agreement to combine the enthusiasm of one of the world's largest Christian student movements with the church-planting expertise of Southern Baptist missionaries.

20 years ago

The 1,744 registered messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board elect Broadmoor Church pastor Jim Futral as president; pass an \$18.9 million budget; and approve a new 160-bed addition to Gulfshore Baptist Assembly that will also double as cafeteria space.

30 years ago

L. Gordon Sansing, pastor of Broadmoor Church, is elected to the position of secretary of Cooperative Missions for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at the recent meeting of the board.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (*I have sinned.*)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

ALL TIED UP

You knew it would happen. You did not know when, but you knew that in time ties would return. Now, some people never wear ties and that is fine with me. Some folks wear ties all of the time even though they have not particularly been in vogue of late and that is fine with me. However, while the non-tie or un-tied generation has been the rage for a number of years, an interesting thing has happened across the land from 2006 forward. Tie sales have increased 13% and according to the statistical analysis, the greatest increase has come among young men in their 20's.

What has created the change? As with so much fashion fuss, they simply decided they wanted to do something different and not be like everybody else. Can you imagine such a thing? Unless you were born during the second Bush presidency, you should have known that it would probably happen. It is the nature of the fashion industry to develop and approve some new idea, some new wrinkle in the fabric, or some new hairstyle. If you live long enough, whatever you consider being out of fashion and out of date will creep back into the culture. People will think that they were the first to discover it.

I am not sure but I think that I have lived through all of the movements of fashion changes two or three times. When it comes to ties, I have seen them come and go. I have watched



Directions

**Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**

them shrink and expand. I have watched as plain was in, only to be pushed aside by wild psychedelic colors and geometric patterns. Fashion trends will continue to ebb and flow and appeal to folk's desire to have something new and clever. Marketing will continue in a way that will attempt to get into your pocketbook.

Over the last decade or so, I have watched as our churches joined the anti-tie movement and a more casual dress approach in coming to church took place. In fact, in some of our congregations virtually no one wears a tie to the worship service. This is usually done and promoted so that people who may not be accustomed to wearing ties will feel comfortable coming to God's house. I think there is validity in that thought process. In fact, some of our churches have done that and dressed casual to the point that if somebody shows up with a tie on, they feel out of place. Just recently I was speaking in one of our churches and before the service started three different people came up to me and said, "What are you doing wearing a tie? We don't dress

like that here!" Of course, most of them knew me. It was a point of contact/conversation, and I think a way of poking fun at me. They surely would not walk up to a stranger who had come to worship with them who was wearing a coat and tie and make him feel awkward or out of place.

Now it seems as though the fashion industry has saturated the market with all of the knit shirts, mock turtlenecks, and dressy casual attire and are ready to change. That plus the fact that now that our society has been influenced to the point where nobody wants to wear a tie, it is time for a few who want to be different, edgy, and trendy to step out and make their changes and so more and more they are starting to put on ties. All of this shifting around brings to focus a number of things that need to be kept in mind.

One thing that we need to realize is that wearing a tie or not wearing a tie does not make us more spiritual. Ties are cultural symbols and fashion expressions. They are not genuine indicators of spirituality. You can put on a tie or take one off and still have a rotten attitude. You can put on a tie or a tee shirt, go to church, and still live a hypocritical life through the week. I have lived long enough to know some wonderful, godly people who came to church on Sunday wearing clean overalls. I have also met some people who wore high dollar suits and fancy ties whose lives gave evidence of the fact that they had no spiritual sensitivity whatsoever. You have heard the old statement, "Clothes do not make the man," and regardless of what you drape on your body, it does not

mean that your heart is any different. The prophet was so clearly on target when he said, "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7b).

A second thing I would point out to all of us is that now that we live in an anti-tie world and may be in the process of moving back toward wearing ties, there will probably be some folks who will react, recoil, or even raise Cain about it. I am confident that there are people who wore ties who did not like ties but felt as if they were supposed to wear them to church. Finally, they went through the process of leaving their ties off and enjoying that newfound freedom of not choking to death for several hours in a worship service and are enjoying a new, relaxed approach. If ties come back, no doubt somebody will probably hear them grumbling about going back to what they grumbled about leaving. Since men wear the vast majority of ties, I am speaking of the male gender that, like some females, does not like change.

The most important thing for us to keep in mind is that whether you have a piece of cloth wrapped around your neck and tied in a knot, or wearing an expensive shirt with a little emblem of a guy sitting on a horse with a stick in his hand, or a tee shirt you got from camp, the glorious fact remains that God loves you. He has a wonderful plan and focus for your life.

Jesus was not critical of the rags that blind Bartimaeus was wearing. He did not critique the grave clothes that had Lazarus bound. He did not comment on the skimpy attire of a dying thief hanging on the cross beside Him. He saw their need, and He passed up all of the fashion or lack thereof. He touched their lives with grace. My encouragement to you is not that you would get on the tie bandwagon or continue the crusade against ties, but to do as Jesus did.

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Thompson Baptist

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

November 15, 2007

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



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For more info or if you have questions, contact Robin Nichols, Financial Services, 601-292-3226 or E-mail rniichols@mbcb.org

DEACON MINISTRY EMPHASIS

Deacon Ministry Emphasis is a plan with specific actions that highlight deacon ministries and involve deacon training and service.

The Purpose of Deacon Emphasis is to:

Focus on their biblical role

Build team relationships

Secure involvement in ministries

Develop skills for ministry

January 2008 is designated by the MBCB as the month to emphasize deacon ministry, however it may be conducted at any time during the year.

For information, contact: Pastor/Leadership Development, Keith Gordon, 601-968-3800, extension 307, or 1-800-748-1651

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Types of Ministries: Light Construction/painting, Community Service & Outreach, Children's Ministries, Acts of Kindness

How to Register: Request a registration packet by calling MS wMu at 800-748-1651, ext. 317, or E-mail lmiller@mbcb.org.



This event is co-sponsored by the Family Ministry Team, Men's Ministry, Mississippi wMu, Jackson Association, and participating local churches.

For more information please contact Don Gann (dgann@mbcb.org) in Men's Ministry or Tammy Anderson (tanderson@mbcb.org) in Mississippi wMu at 800-748-1651.

BIVO/SMALL CHURCH MINISTERS & WIVES RETREAT

Providing a time of encouragement, inspiration and fellowship

November 30 - December 1

Enon BC, Grenada

Lodging: Holiday Inn Express

Leaders:

**Bryan Presson
Joel Medina**

Contact Lowell Ingram, 662-226-5071, for info on scholarships, and contact the Holiday Inn Express, 662-226-5071, Grenada, Miss., for info on lodging.

Sponsored by: Pastor/Leadership Development Department



The Suit Project

*Merry Christmas to pastors in the
Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware*

What is the suit project?

For over 43 years Mississippi Baptists have enjoyed sending new suits to pastors in new work areas. Many of these pastors have no suit nor have the extra money to purchase one. By sending them a suit we are letting the pastors know that we care about them and that we support their work.

What can I do?

Simply make a donation to the ministry. Each suit will cost \$135. This can be a special project for Men's Ministry groups, Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action, or WMU groups. For churches or individuals looking for a ministry that really touches someone's life, the Suit Project is the perfect choice.

Where do I send my donation?

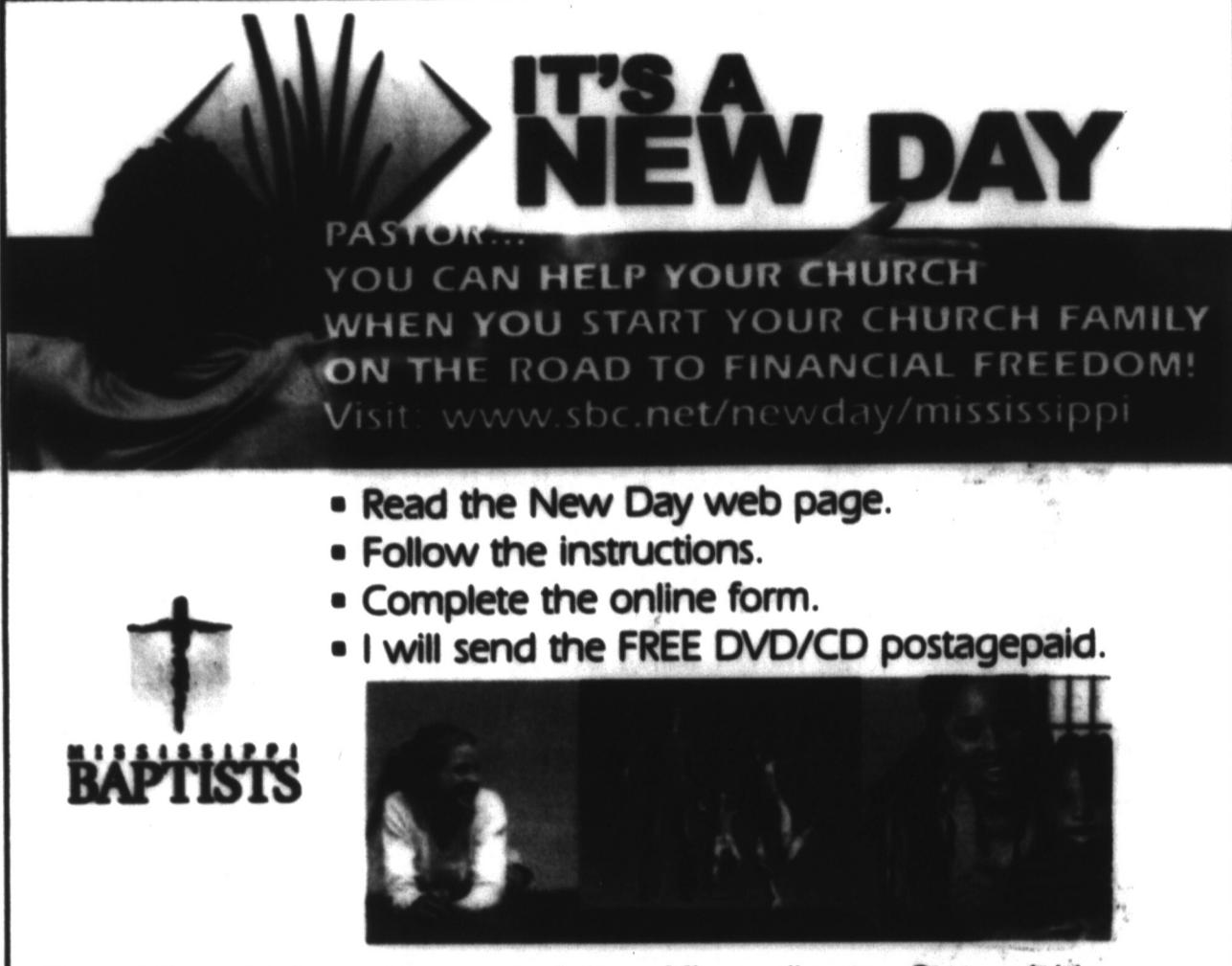
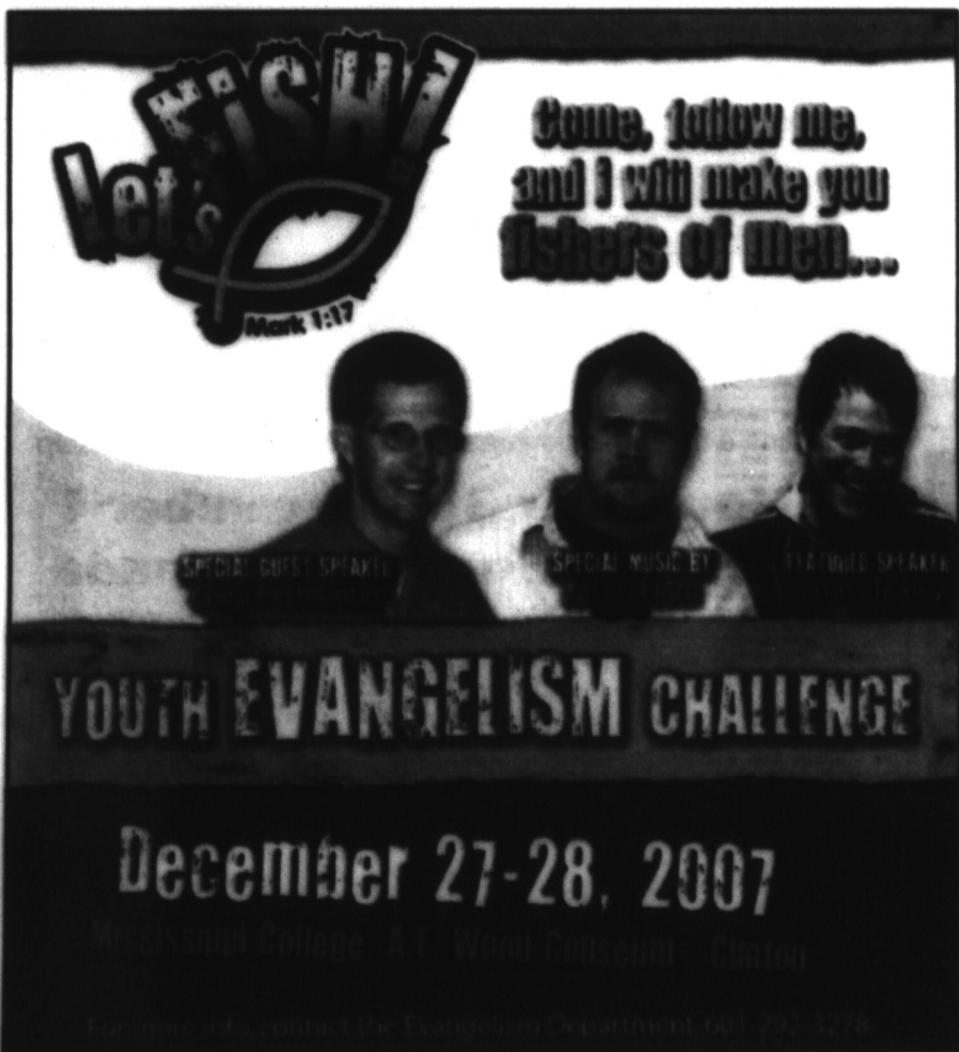
Make your check payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and designate your check to the Suit Project.

Mail to:

Men's Ministry Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Pastors' Wives

If funds are available, we will send a clothing gift certificate to the pastor's wife! Often they go without things that they want or need to support their husband's ministry. This is a wonderful way to show them that they are not forgotten and that the support they provide their husband is truly appreciated.



For additional information, contact Jerry Mixon, director, Stewardship Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 1.800.748.1651, ext. 347/601.292-3347.





MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CHURCH MUSIC CONFERENCE

January 31- February 1, 2008 First Baptist Church, Natchez, Miss.

**All music ministers, accompanists, musicians and college students
in church music are encouraged to attend.**

Registration begins at 12:00 p.m.
Mississippi Singing Churchmen Rehearsal at 1:30 p.m.
Churchmen Bells Rehearsal at 12:30 p.m.

**Conference begins at 4:00 p.m. Thursday
with regular session and ends after the banquet Friday evening.**

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES FOR LADIES

There are so many sights, activities and points of interest to be enjoyed in Natchez. Information will be available and opportunity provided for the ladies to make plans together.

HOST MINISTER OF MUSIC: L. Graham Smith, Interim



Christian Performing Arts Festival

Cost: \$35 per person by January 18
 (includes lunch on Saturday and T-shirt; free admission
 for one leader per 10 paid participants)



The Christian Performing Arts Festival offers platform performances, creative worship and 90+ seminar options in the areas of puppetry, clowning, drama, media, missions, church recreation and youth ministry. These seminars range from beginning to advanced levels and are designed to better equip youth ministers, lay leaders, church staff and students to be more creative in their worship ministry

and in creative arts evangelism. It is our hope that you will consider being a part of this weekend in 2008.

February 22-23, 2008

First Baptist Church

Tupelo

- Puppetry
- Clowning
- Drama
- Media
- Missions
- Church Recreation
- Youth Ministry



**Featured Guests:
FISHWORKS**

*Child care is not provided.
 This conference is geared for
 6th grade thru adult.*

If you have any questions about the festival, please contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, at 601-292-3283 or 1-800-748-1651 or E-mail at redwards@mbcb.org.



4th Annual Senior Adult Evangelism Rally

Place: Emmanuel BC, Grenada

Date: January 22, 2008

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Four Breakouts:

"Taking up your Towels" (John 13)
 Phil Walker, Pastor, Ridgecrest, Madison

"Fresh Encounter with God"
 Bill Patterson, Pastor, FBC, Richland

"Evangelism through Caregiving"
 Cindy Still, Alabama

(former WMU Director of Nevada Convention/
 Consultant for the Missouri Convention)

For Leaders: "What Makes a Good Senior Leader?"
 Bobby Shows, Missouri

(former Senior Adult Consultant for Missouri Convention)

Music: Russell Newport, Springhill, Missouri
 Pianist: Irene Martin, Harperville, Miss.

Preacher: John Avant
 (former Vice President of Evangelism for the NAMB)
 Pastor of FBC, West Monroe, La.

If you have any questions, please call Discipleship and Family Ministry at 601-292-3373 or 1-800-748-1651 or E-mail gshows@mbcb.org.

AREA	LOCATION	FESTIVAL LEADER	PHONE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2008, 6:30-9:30 p.m.			
2	Harrisburg BC, Tupelo 4675 Cliff Gookin Blvd., Tupelo 38801	Mignon Williamson	(H) 662-840-9970
4	Fairview BC, Columbus 127 Airline Rd., Columbus 39702	Slater Murphy	(C) 662-328-2924
5	FBC, Jackson 431 N. State St., Jackson 39201	Wyndy South	(O) 601-292-3272
6	Central BC, Meridian 2511 C St., Meridian 39302	Harry Tillery	(C) 601-693-4288
7	FBC, McComb 1700 Delaware Ave., McComb 39648	Greg Stone	(C) 601-684-2971
8	Laurel area	TBA	
FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2008, 6:30-9:30 p.m.			
1	Hernando BC, Hernando 11 E. Center St., Hernando 38632	Barry Tweedy	(C) 662-429-6389
8	Carterville BC, Petal 1115 Carterville Rd., Petal 39465	Kathy Vail	(H) 601-264-7443
9	FBC, Vancleave 12513 Hwy 57, Vancleave 39565	Tim Wilson	(C) 228-826-5806
SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2008, 9:30 a.m.-noon			
3	Emmanuel BC 245 Meadowbrook Rd., Grenada 38901	Barry Worrell	(C) 662-226-5316
3	North Greenwood BC 615 Grand Blvd., Greenwood 38930	Patricia Ethridge Tommy Smith	(C) 662-453-2801

(H) - Home / (C) - Church / (O) - Office



LOCATIONS

AREA KEYBOARD FESTIVALS 2008 CALENDAR & LOCATIONS

Pray this day for...

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"Give thanks for everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

I Thessalonians 5:18 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

The Chichimeca-Pame of San Luis Potosi, Mexico, are a small people group of only 2,000 people, yet God cares about even one lost soul. Church-planting efforts in the last few years have led to very few believers. Pray for workers to go and develop a Bible story set that will accurately and appropriately communicate God's Story and bring them to a saving relationship with Christ.

International Service Corps workers Ted and Connie Blaylock arrived in Trelew at the end of August, to work three years in the Patagonia. They are living and ministering out of a bus that has been converted into a rustic motor home, and will work in small towns and remote villages to plant churches. Ask God to begin to show them a "man of peace" [Luke 10:6] in each of the strategic areas where they work.

Thanks to the hard work of an Operation GO (Gospel Outreach) team from the United States, hundreds of homes in a violent section of downtown Mexico City were given copies of the Gospel. The team also handed out an announcement of the premier of an evangelical movie entitled "La Santa Muerte" (Holy Death). Ask our Lord to convict those receiving these materials of their need for Him.

Cuban Baptists want 1 million people on their island to personally know Christ by the year 2010. They are calling for Baptists in Cuba and around the world to join them in prayer for this goal to be reached during "50 Days of Prayer for Cuba," beginning Easter Sunday, 2008. Prays that nothing will hinder what the Lord is doing across Cuba.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS AND LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING EMPHASIS (NMU). Pray that believers will open their hearts and wallets to sacrificially fund international missions. Pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon all who challenge people to give and upon all who hear that challenge.

M is a language teacher in southern India. She has heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, but she has not yet accepted Him as her personal Savior. M is a Muslim who believes that Jesus was a very powerful prophet. She does not yet believe that only He can save her from her sins. As M continues to hear about Jesus, pray that all barriers will be broken down and she will see Jesus Christ for who He truly is.

Praise God for a believer, Mrs. HT of Sapporo, Japan. Please intercede for her, as she is extremely discouraged. She is lonely for other believers with whom to worship. Although she loves to share her faith, she has become very disheartened, as those whom she has led to the Lord do not understand the need to gather for worship on a regular basis. Please pray for her to have renewed strength and joy.

Pray for the Dholi people who live in the northwestern part of India (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat). The Dholi are often called upon to play the drum (dhol) and other instruments for weddings. There are approximately 137,500 Dholi people, and they are predominantly Hindu. According to statistics, no one is working among this group.

Pray for the MBCB Executive Committee Meeting and MBCB Board Meeting today. Pray that each item discussed and every decision made will be filtered through the sieve of, "How will God be glorified through this?"

Pray for the next generation of the Caribbean, which includes university students, young professionals and working young people. Many have never been reached with the gospel. Others have grown up in traditional churches that no longer meet their spiritual needs. One thing is certain: Every young person needs to know that they can have a personal relationship with Christ.

THANKSGIVING DAY: Thank God for His incredible grace and mercy through which we, undeserving sinners, have been brought into His family. The Lord Jesus Christ bridged a gap to reach down to us far greater than any gap we may "think" we have to cross to reach another. The ground at the foot of the cross is level for every one of us. Thank God for reaching you!

Since the majority of West Africans are oral learners, sharing Christ is generally most effective through oral means. Each week in various locations throughout West Africa, God's Word is heard on the radio and on CDs or cassettes. Pray that as God's Word is read, spoken and heard each day in West Africa, the message will go forth in abundance and with power.

Pray for the Dholi people who live in the northwestern part of India (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat). The Dholi are often called upon to play the drum (dhol) and other instruments for weddings. There are approximately 137,500 Dholi people, and they are predominantly Hindu. According to statistics, no one is working among this group.

Most Central Chilenos claim to be Christians; this usually means that they identify culturally with the Roman Catholic Church. However, few have ever heard a presentation of the gospel that explains the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Please intercede for missionary Mary Jo Cooke, who is developing a strategy to work with the multiple high-rise apartment buildings in central Chile.

(1) Please pray faithfully for the spiritual, physical and emotional protection of MKs (missionary kids) and their families. Pray that the children's educational needs will be met and blessed. (2) Pray for rain for the drought stressed areas of the United States.

What is the answer to the AIDS problem in Swaziland? The answer is not education, money, or people coming to teach about AIDS, though they are all needed. The answer is Jesus Christ. Pray that Christians will live pure and holy lives so that through their witness, many Swazis will come to know Jesus as their Savior.

Please pray for the Popoluca people of Mexico. While they adhere to the traditional religion, they still maintain pre-Hispanic rituals dedicated to planting, hunting and fishing. Ask God to lead someone to tell them His true Story as found in Scripture.

The Amuzgo of Guerrero, a Pacific state in Mexico, number 30,000. They are an agricultural people and are also known for their beautiful pottery and intricate textiles. Some evangelical work has begun among this people group, and they do have some portions of the Bible translated into their language. Pray for workers who are willing to go and live among them.

The Leadership Equipping and Development (LEAD) team of South Asia has lost several team members this year. Pray that the Lord will call out new couples with a willingness to live out of a suitcase much of the year, and with a vision for leadership training among the church leaders of South Asia who have had little or no opportunity for training. The team's desire is not to cancel seminars due to a lack of personnel.

Pray for a short-term worker, J., who will be returning to the United States soon. Ask that he will perceive God's leading as he searches for what God desires next for him. Also pray for healing of osteoarthritis of the knees that he is suffering from, although a young man.

For Singles: Did I Get Out of Bed for This?

Saturday, January 26, 2008 12:30 - 4 p.m.
Easthaven Baptist Church, Brookhaven

No cost to you! Conference starts with ice cream social and praise band ... Cookout after conference for a great time of fellowship with singles from all over Mississippi! For more info, contact Talmadge Smith at 601-833-8111.

Discipleship and Family Ministry



Got Questions? COMMUNICATION SERVICES Has Answers For:

- Church Media
- Video & DVD Checkout
- Church Library

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

MARCH 27-29, 2008

"Ministry from the Heart"

Church Library Ministry Retreat
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

MAY 2-3, 2008

Witnessing Through Media
Awards Banquet and Workshops
Park Place Baptist Church, Pearl

OCTOBER 3-4, 2008

State Church Library Ministry Conference
First Baptist Church, Madison

Communication Services Contacts:

Ian Richardson, director
601-292-3378
irichardson@mbcb.org

Judy Chen, ministry assistant
601-292-3378
jchen@mbcb.org

Audrey Hill, ministry assistant
601-292-3254
ahill@mbcb.org

1-800-748-1651

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Central & Eastern Europe

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MISS STEPHANIE YOUNG
Parents: Steven & Laura
Middle America

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MISS HANNAH M. RAY
Parents: Michael & Linda
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1/27/00

MISS AIMEE YEAGER
Parents: Tommy & Jennifer
Last Frontier

Due to security reasons, full names or region of service may not be published.

Due to security reasons in many countries, cards should not include any wording referencing church, Christian, God, missionary, etc.

Cards will be forwarded. No magazines or periodicals can be forwarded.

Please send all to:

Child's name, Parent's name
MBCB wMu MK Birthdays,
PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the wMu.



Draper: Sunday School concept on rebound

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

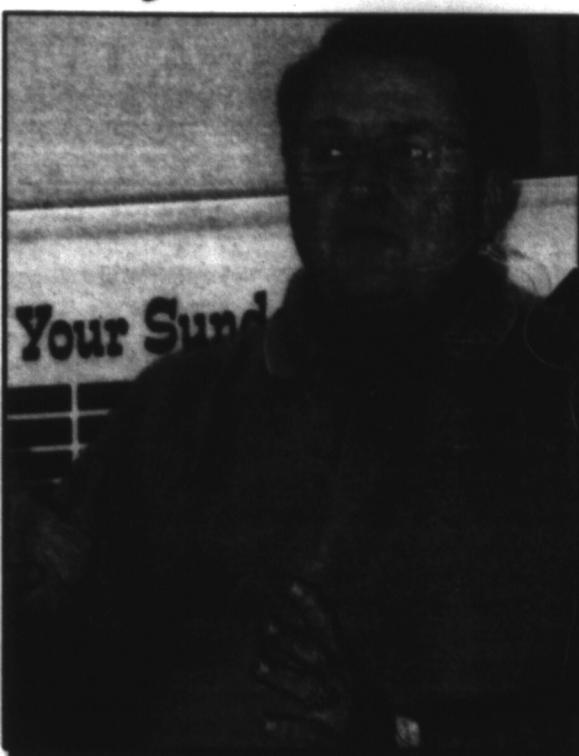
"We have a scriptural mandate to make disciples," said Kiely Young, director of the Sunday School Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), during a recent Sunday School Conference at First Church, Winona. "When we make disciples, we grow the church."

The keynote speaker for the conference was Jimmy Draper, former president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Nashville from 1991-2006, and a longtime Southern Baptist preacher and pastor.

In 2004, Draper struck a chord with younger leaders across the SBC when he challenged those at the annual meeting to make a way to include younger leaders. He then traveled across the country listening to younger leaders and became even more convinced that their passion and enthusiasm for reaching the lost for Christ was needed to reinvigorate a denomination whose foundation is built upon evangelism and missions.

In his comments during an interview in Winona, Draper affirmed what Young had stated.

"There is a strong move of church planting in contemporary churches that may not be using Sunday School per se; they are using small groups," Draper said. "Most of our churches are doing some form of Sunday



FRESH PERSPECTIVES — Jimmy Draper, former president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, shares his thoughts with conferees at First Church, Winona, during a Sunday School Conference. (Photo by Tony Martin)

School. They may call it connections class, or Bible study. There are home groups, but the thing I deeply believe is that you've got to lead people to study the Bible. Our people are deeply ignorant of the Bible. They have little Bible knowledge and even less Bible application.

"I think Sunday School is on the rebound. We went through a period where we didn't have any

growth at all, but there is a growth in enrollment. What's on my heart is two things: You have to have quality teachers, and you have to have quality curriculum. It doesn't matter what literature you use — the curriculum is the Scripture.

"One danger I see is that in our search for teachers in our churches, we have people serving who are not qualified to serve. That's not a slam on anyone, but that's the reason conferences like this are important, because people need to be trained.

"In the first century teachers were paramount. The apostles were itinerant. The longest Paul stayed anywhere was two or three years, so it was the teacher that was the

stabilizing force in the first century. Now, today, the theologian for the church is the Sunday School teacher. They have more time with the average churchgoer than the pastor does."

Draper said he was pleased to be sharing with conference attendees at First Church, Winona. The church is the pillar and ground of Southern Baptist Sunday School, as it was the

home church of businessman Arthur Flake, who is responsible for the little book, *Building a Standard Sunday School*.

What has become known as "Flake's Formula" in that book is the foundation for virtually all Baptist Sunday School work since initial publication in 1922.

Draper pondered what Flake would think of the state of Sunday School in 2007.

"By and large, our churches are flat," said Draper. "We say 70% are plateaued or declining, but actually it's more like 80%. It's interesting — the kind of weekend Christianity we have would be unknown in the New Testament. It would be unknown in most of church history."

"The kind of people who died to get Scripture to us, people like Wycliffe and Tyndale, wouldn't recognize the kind of Christianity we have today. The big thing to me is that Jesus died so that He could be 'everything' in our lives. To most of us, He's 'something.' The idea that we have been put in the world to spread the Gospel is foreign to the average Southern Baptist."

Draper also believes there can be a problem with leadership.

"I tell pastors all the time that you lead by example," Draper said. "I tell them that if they want a soul-winning church, they have to be soul winners themselves. We've developed this CEO mentality."

Bibliocipher
By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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ELY BCTIT ELTUCQPOLO

TEPY ILWM WRCN, WRCV

WREW EQC URMZC LCCY

LMW E FRVTPXPEL; KIW

WRCV WREW EQC TPXA.

ZIAC JPSC: WRPQWV-MLC

Clue: U = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Eight: Thirty-Six.

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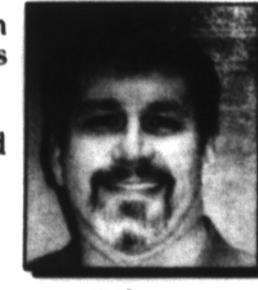
Haymes

Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, has called Neal L. Wallace as minister of music. He and his wife Toni come from Bethany Church, Andalusia, Ala.



Wallace

Roseland Park Church, Picayune, has called Kriss Haymes as pastor. He comes from Tulsa, Okla., with his wife and four children.



Belton

Big Level Church, Wiggins, has called Dean Belton as minister of music.

◆ ◆ ◆

Thank You Mississippi Baptists

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is grateful to Mississippi Baptists who are graciously giving to the Mississippi Manor Student Housing Project. Your generous gifts will help provide student families with quality, affordable campus housing for years to come. Thank you.

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For more information about this ongoing project
contact Tom Boone in Picayune, Mississippi
at 1.800.426.1886 or msnobts.bellsouth.net



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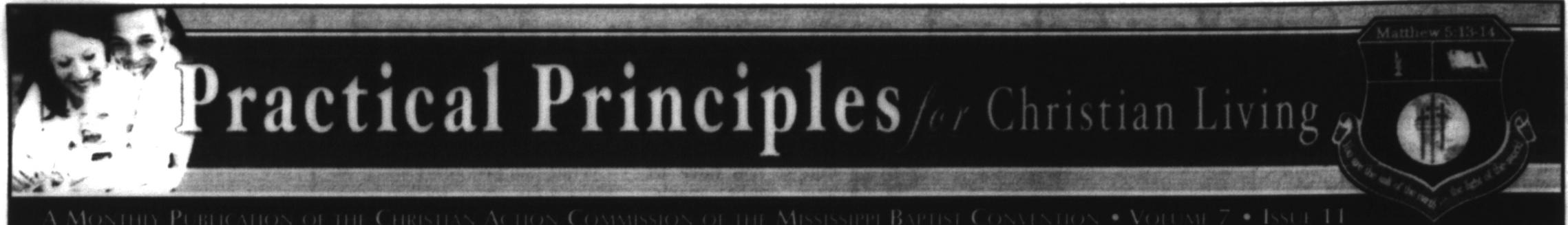
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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 11

GOD'S IDEA

By Jimmy Porter, executive director
Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission

Scripture teaches us that the family is older than the church. God in his wisdom established the family long before he organized the church. Genesis 1:24 says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." The home was and is God's idea.

The early church did not meet in elaborate worship centers, but they did assemble in the homes. The Southern Baptist Convention is comprised of thousands of churches that could be called "family" churches. What I mean by that is that everything the church does is directed toward the family, even the height and size of the platform.

One such church had the pulpit platform two feet in height with six inch steps. The reason was so children could walk onto the platform easily and present their VBS and Christmas programs.

If you examine the programs of these churches, you will find much of what they do revolves around the family —homecoming, reunions, revivals, and fellowships. They even recognize all the birthdays of the week along with all the wedding anniversaries. They worship the Lord each Sunday, promote all the special offerings and still support the Cooperative Program. They are stable and seldom "split" because they are all related to one another. They take care of one another

and can be counted on in a time of crisis. They remain the backbone of the convention because they realize the importance of family.

What does all of this have to do with the Mississippi Baptist Convention and more particularly, the Christian Action Commission? Throughout this past year the staff here has been involved with our legislators in supporting laws that strengthen our families and working to defeat laws that tear down the family and are harmful to the cause of Christ.

We have continued to work alongside churches and associations who have and are facing gambling and liquor referendums. We have provided materials and information to churches who have taken a Christian stand against the social ills in their communities.

The Christian Action Commission has been the agency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in speaking out on abortion and gathering pennies from all across our state for the Memorial to the Missing. We now have approximately 47 million pennies in the Memorial. Pray with us that we will reach our goal of fifty million pennies by the end of this year. If you haven't given and feel led to participate, you can make a check out to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, designate it to the Memorial to the Missing, and mail it to the Christian Action Commission, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Your gift will be

changed into pennies and placed alongside others who have already given.

Having said all of this, I want you to know that the Christian Action Commission is really about families. Never before in the history of our world have so many assaults been launched at the family. Therefore, our pledge to you is to continue working in 2008 to make Mississippi a place where families can and will be what God designed them to be.

If there is any way we can assist you in the coming year, please give us a call. Working together we can make a difference. The holiday season is upon us, and it provides a wonderful opportunity to gather your family for Thanksgiving and Christmas to celebrate what God has done in your lives. Also, spend some time sharing with one another how special they are and then thank God for each other.

Happy Thanksgiving!



REVIVAL

First Church, McLaurin, Hattiesburg: Revival, Nov. 25-28; evening services, 7 p.m.; Gary Bowlin, speaker; John Hubbell, music; Neil Harvison, pastor; for information, call (601) 583-8007.



1. Jager

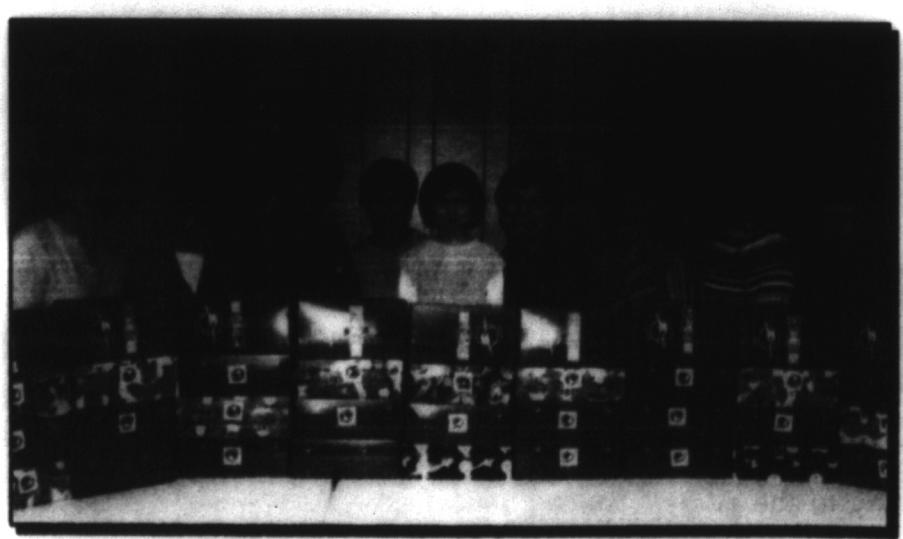
JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. Macedonia Church, Mendenhall, exceeded its \$2300 Margaret Lackey goal by collecting \$2325. Shown is pastor David Jager modeling the hat designed by the ladies of Women on Mission.



2. 100 year anniversary, Hebron Church, Meridian

2. Hebron Church, Meridian, celebrated its 100 year anniversary Oct. 27-28 with a gospel sing, beef stew supper, fashion show, and special Sunday service and covered dish fellowship. Shown are some of the participants in the fashion show.



3. Martha Class, Central Grove Church, Wren

The USA Revival

Thanksgiving Prayer Meeting

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

Gates open, 3:30 p.m. / Service, 5-7:30 p.m.
Candlelight Prayer at 7:00 p.m.
MS AG & Forestry Museum

Come & enjoy the early 1900's smalltown, Mississippi. Join in prayers and music to thank God for our state and country and pray for a nationwide revival. Free admission - Everyone is welcome.

For more info: Call 1-800-684-9486 or 1-601-248-7000 or visit www.theUSArevival.com. Bring your lawn chairs.

Not affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

20/20 Vision

Matthew 7:1-12

By Alice Smith

20/20 Vision is perfect vision which enables one to see clearly from any distance. Our challenge is to allow God to direct His perfect vision into our hearts and reveal the Truth to us. The scrutiny will be painful, but necessary.

The attributes of being "judgmental" and "self-righteous" seem to go together. We may think we aren't guilty of these ugly attitudes. Most of us would say how much we dislike judgmental and self-righteous characteristics in others. It has also been said that the things we do not like in others are probably the things of which we are most guilty. (Ouch!)

The verses in Matthew 7:1-5(HCSB) do not mince words. Read along in your Bible as we look at these verses on

judging others.

The questions are: Do we want others to judge us as harshly as we judge them? Do we want God to be as condemning to us as we are to others? The warning is clear in these verses that when we dare to judge others, we invite the judgment of God upon us.

It is a dramatic picture Jesus paints of a person with a huge stick protruding out of his eye while trying to remove a little tiny speck out of someone else's. We are so quick to see another's sin and not see our own. I daresay we are all guilty of this. How do we avoid this hypocritical and ugly attitude toward others?

Here is the answer: The more we come to an understanding and recognition of who God is,



Smith

the less we will feel godly. In other words, the more we feel that we are horribly ungodly and recognize and embrace the fact that we are in dire need of the saving grace of Jesus Christ, the more pleasing we become to God, for then we become truly teachable.

And when we feel this way, it is impossible to be hard on others.

A right relationship with our Creator and with others comes when we prostrate ourselves, with fear and trembling, before the righteousness of God, hiding our faces before Him in reverence and awe, praising and thanking Him for His mighty and unspeakable gift of redemption through the once and for all sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. Humbling ourselves before God enables us to come to a knowledge of His Spirit living in us, guiding, helping, and imparting strength to do right. It is then that we begin to understand the meaning of, "Christ in you, the Hope of Glory!"

We must see our own sins clearly and receive God's forgiveness before we can have a right relationship with others. When we acknowledge our sin and embrace Christ, we are enabled to show compassion to others, and not judgment.

Isaiah 1:18b(NAS) says, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow." Some beautiful words to an anthem ring in my heart: "Somewhere it's snowing, see the soft drifting down." This is describing God's forgiveness covering us. Though your sins are as scarlet, are you becoming "white as snow?"

Verse 6(HCSB) is a little puzzling, perhaps: "Don't give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them with their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces."

The Broadman Commentary helps: "Although it is the Christian's business to share what is Holy (pearls) with any who will receive, there are times when one can only remain silent or try to bring about a better climate for a later sharing."

Verses 7-11 give us the beautiful "Ask, Seek, and Knock" verses. We must exercise these actions through prayer, with an openness to God, so we may receive God's wisdom as we deal with others. The theme is persistent prayer. God wants to give good things to those who ask Him. Our experience with Him says this is so.

Verse 12(HCSB) gives us "The Golden Rule," "Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them—this is the law and the Prophets."

We must treat others as we want to be treated: we make choices that affect others for good, like keeping our temper in check or putting another's comfort and welfare before our own. Words like "truth," "honor," "integrity," and "honesty," become bonded with our souls. In other words, we become more obedient to God and we begin to understand the real meaning of the Mind of Christ, which makes it easier to love others more.

Smith is a member of First Church, Jackson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE Involved in Ministry

Matthew 25:31-46

By Michael Smith

Chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew's Gospel are identified by many scholars as "The Olivet Discourse." It is one of many discourses in Matthew's Gospel and its primary emphasis is on the imminence of Jesus' glorious return. Jesus taught his disciples two lessons in this profoundly descriptive passage. First, Jesus taught the disciples to be prepared for his glorious return. Christ followers must live lives of great expectation and anticipation. The second lesson, which is the subject of the lesson passage for this week, centers on what will happen on the day when Jesus returns.

1. A Day of Separation (Matthew 25:31-33)

Jesus' glorious return will be quite different from his glorious



Smith

incarnation. The world will in no way be unaware of his glorious return as it was when he first came in the form of an infant born into an unimportant family in an insignificant city. Rather than being placed in a lowly manger, Jesus will return to take his place upon his sovereign throne. All the nations of the earth will parade before the righteous judge and every individual who has ever lived will bow down before glorious King Jesus and confess him as Lord (Philippians 2:11). The purpose of this parade of humanity is to separate those few faithful who have chosen the narrow way that leads to life from the masses that have chosen the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus likens this day of separation to the common task of the ancient

2. A Day of Judgment (Matthew 25:33)

Jesus' glorious return will result in the separation of all of humanity into two distinct groups of people. The Bible clearly teaches that every person who has ever lived will stand before Jesus to account for the stewardship of their time on earth: "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment..." (Hebrews 9:27 NIV). The criterion for this great Day of Judgment is very simple—the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Have you received the free gift of salvation made

available by Christ's death on the cross or have you consistently rejected the necessity of the cross and perpetually hardened your heart to Jesus' invitation to eternal life? What decision did you make about Jesus during your days on earth? Jesus will weigh the evidence of your decision and render his judgment. The evidence that the righteous judge deliberates over is the outward manifestation of inward transformation. New birth results in new life which is manifested through ministry to fellow Christians and to the world. Jesus provides a clear demonstration of the manifestation of regeneration through ministry: "...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40 NIV). The evidence of your salvation is ministry. We are not saved by our ministry, but we minister to one another and to the lost world because we are saved. Leon Morris, a beloved New Testament scholar, grants us precious clarity in this matter: "The passage deals only with

works, which are seen as the test of whether one is saved or not; nothing is said here about grace or faith or Christ's atoning work...We must bear in mind that it is common to the whole scriptural picture that we are saved by grace and judge by works" (The Gospel According to Matthew, 634).

3. A Day of Reward and Condemnation (Matthew 25:46)

The judgment rendered by the righteous Judge against the nations will result in either reward or condemnation. The righteous, who have been saved by Christ's atoning sacrifice, will receive the fullness of their heavenly inheritance. The lost, who have consistently rejected the cross, will be condemned to eternal punishment in a godless hell. The bottom line of heaven and hell fuels the urgency of Jesus' command to be prepared and Jesus' commission to go into all the world and proclaim the Good News of God's salvation.

Smith is pastor of Bethel Church, Monticello.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

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**THE BAPTIST
Record**

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Deacon ordinations, West Ripley Church, Ripley



2. Fall Festival, Union Church, Union



3. Greer licensed, New Prospect Church, Brookhaven

1. **West Ripley Church, Ripley**, ordained three new deacons Oct. 14. Shown, from left, are Ben Reaves, David Grant, and Stan Roberson.

2. **Union Church, Union**, recently sponsored a fall festival during which the RAs, GAs, and Mission Friends encouraged children and adults with games, a walk-a-thon, trunk or treat and a hayride. The church gave \$583.75 to World Hunger through their efforts. Shown are some of the participants.

3. **New Prospect Church, Brookhaven**, licensed Matthew Greer to the gospel ministry Sept. 16. Shown are pastor Willie Welch and Greer.

4. **Glading Church, Amite County**, exceeded their Margaret Lackey goal of \$600. Shown is pastor Bryon Wilkinson wearing the state missions hat.

5. **Park Haven Church, Laurel**, recognized Jimmy Downs for five years as music director. Shown are pastor Steven Holifield and Downs.

6. **Drew Church, Drew**, honored Charlie Brock Oct. 14 for serving as a deacon for 50 years. Shown are deacon chairman Randy Gray and Brock.

7. **Nat Mayhall, AMD for Alcorn Association, 1982-89**, was honored at Alcorn Association's annual meeting. He received a plaque and the 2007 annual was dedicated in his honor.

8. **Goss Church, Columbia**, will be a drop off center for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes from Nov. 12-18.

9. **Monticello Church, Monticello**, ordained Tate Ervin as deacon Aug. 26. Shown are Ervin and pastor Jon Daniels.



4. Wilkinson, Glading Church, Amite County



5. Downs recognized, Park Haven Church, Laurel



6. Deacon ordination, Drew Church, Drew



9. Deacon ordination, Monticello Church, Monticello

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COLLEGE NEWS

Number 12 ranked William Carey University's women's soccer team dropped their first game of the season as the Lady Crusaders fell to #1 Lee University, 2-0, in the 2007 Region XIII Championship game. Carey wrapped up its season with a 19-1-1 record.

Read Diket, professor of art and education at William Carey University, will present the lecture Leonardo da Vinci: A Man for Our Time? Dec. 4, 7 p.m., at the Student Conference Center of Wilkes Hall.

William Carey University graduate nursing student Melissa Ortego of Lumberton received the Promise of Nursing for Mississippi Regional Faculty Fellowship in the amount of \$7,500 from the Foundation of the National Student Nurses Association (FNSNA).

Mississippi College hosted an I Love America Day Oct. 25, with three government speakers urging the students to get more involved as student volunteers, to vote on Nov. 6, and to consider careers in public service.

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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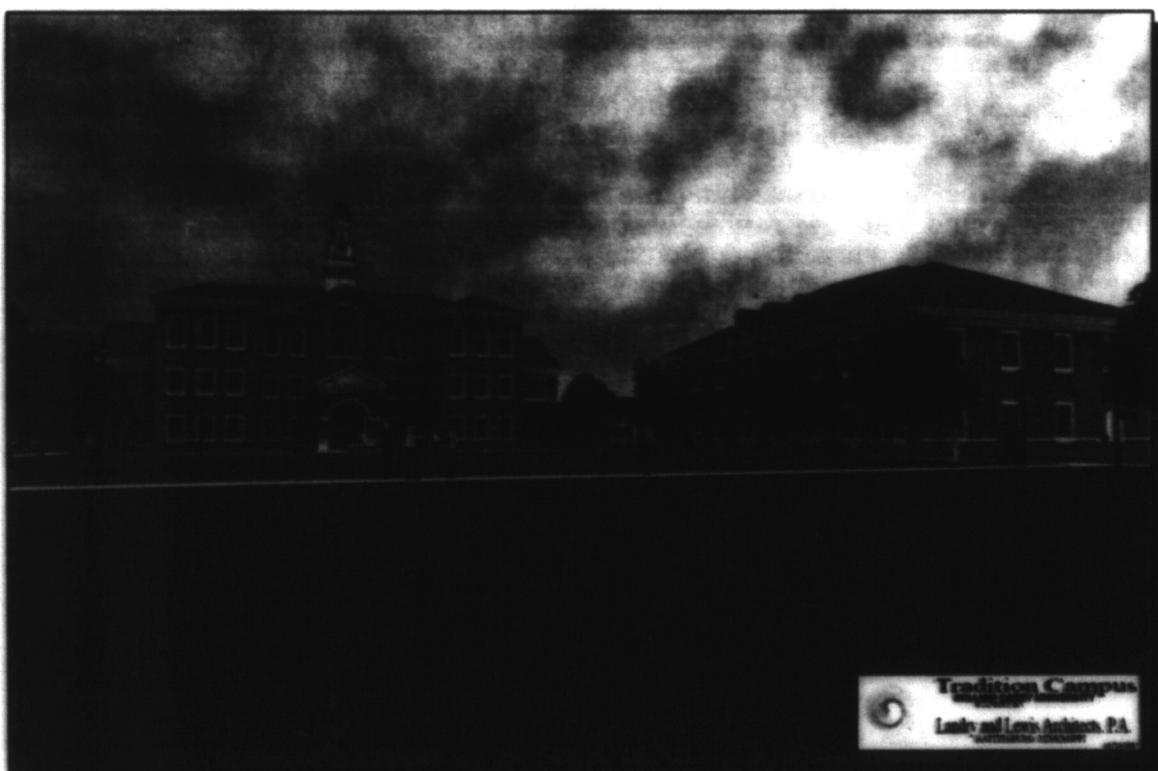
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**MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS**

 Architectural rendering
of WCU Tradition Campus

 Tradition Campus
Ladd & Lewis Architects, P.A.
Architectural rendering

WCU to relocate Gulf Coast campus

 By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Officials at William Carey University (WCU) in Hattiesburg announced plans November 13 to relocate the Baptist-affiliated school's Hurricane Katrina-battered Gulf Coast campus to Tradition, a master planned community currently under development in central Harrison County at the intersection of new state Highways 67 and 605.

At a press conference held at the school's current beachfront Gulf Coast campus site on Highway 90 in Gulfport, WCU President Tommy King said groundbreaking for the \$15 million Phase 1 initial construction will be held in March of next year. A total of 30 acres of land has been obtained, with an additional 20 acres set aside for future expansion.

"We believe that the Tradition community vision, amenities, and residential options will provide a significant advantage when we recruit students, faculty, and staff to the university," King said.

Tradition, estimated to cost \$2 billion when completed, is the largest planned community under development in Mississippi. When completed, the 4,800-acre town will have 15,000 residential units, two million square feet of commercial development, and 35,000-40,000 residents.

Phase 1 initial construction at the WCU Tradition site will include 30,000 square feet of classroom buildings, 30,000 square feet of the administrative space, and a 550-



PLANS UNVEILED — Tommy King (right), president of Baptist-affiliated William Carey University (WCU) in Hattiesburg, looks over an architectural rendering of the first buildings to be constructed at the school's new Gulf Coast campus at the Tradition development in Harrison County. Joining him are Gerald Bracey (left), administrative dean of the WCU Gulf Coast campus and Ralph Noonkester, former WCU president who acquired the original Gulf Coast campus property. The school's present campus along the Highway 90 beachfront in Gulfport was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

vehicle parking lot. The new campus will open in the fall of 2009.

The main building will house administrative offices, a large open-air student lounge, bookstore, general classrooms, and the WCU Nursing School's lecture, lab, and exam rooms as well as psychiatric study/exam/treatment rooms.

The second building will house a large library, computer lab, and 26 classrooms and science labs.

Phase 1 future plans include construction of seven additional buildings, 700 additional parking places, and a "campanile" or clock tower. Phase 2 construction calls for an additional 240,000 square feet of classroom, research, and performing arts space, 22,000 square feet of athletic fields, and 450 additional parking spaces.

The school is currently holding classes in portable trailers at the Highway 90 beachfront location, which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. There are currently more

than 600 students attending the Gulf Coast campus, an increase of almost ten percent over pre-Katrina levels.

School officials estimate that three to four times more students apply than can be accepted at the current Gulf Coast campus because of space limitations. If growth projections come to pass, those school officials say, the Phase 1 initial construction will be at capacity by the time the new construction is completed.

Plans call for the Gulf Coast campus to serve 3,000 students over the next ten years.

William Carey University, affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention, was founded in 1906 as South Mississippi College, later named Mississippi Woman's College, and then William Carey College. The school currently operates campuses in Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and New Orleans.

The school can be contacted at (601) 318-6051, or toll-free (800) 962-5991. Web site: www.wmcarey.edu.





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Trustees of the International Mission Board turned up the heat on dissident trustee Wade Burleson on November 6, when they met in executive session to censure Burleson and suspend him for four trustee meetings for what they termed multiple violations of the trustee's code of conduct.

Burleson, pastor of Immanuel Church in Enid, Ok., and a former president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, has been an irritant to board trustees during most of his term of service. This is largely due to this persistent use of blogging to take issue with actions and policies of the board.

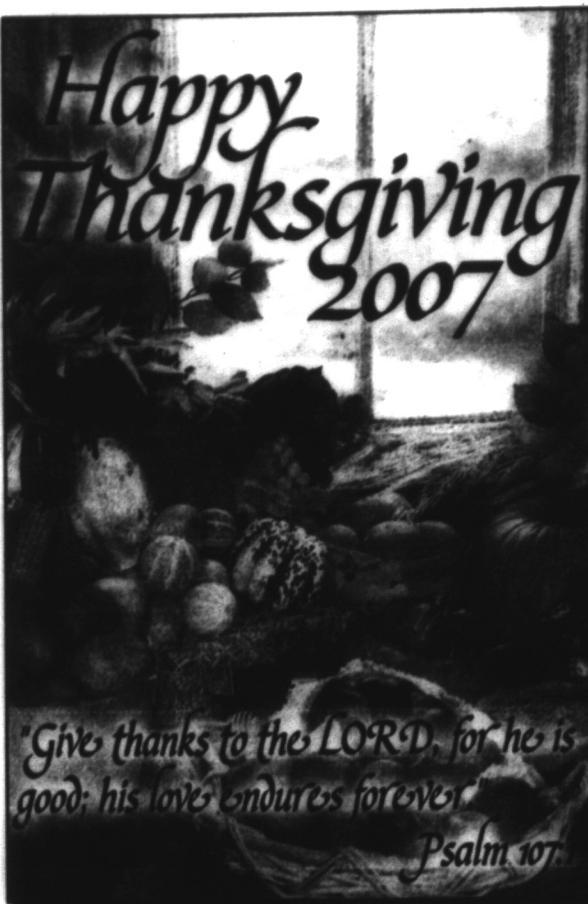
The term "blog" is short for "weblog," a type of interactive commentary carried on across the Internet. It can be compared to old-style letters to the editor of a newspaper, with the distinct difference being that people are able to openly express their opinions without any gatekeepers (someone who would choose to publish or not publish a particular letter, such as an editor). Other people can also readily respond to agree or disagree.

There are literally millions of blogs now on the Internet, dealing with every imaginable subject. Burleson has chosen to blog about international missions issues on <http://kerussocharis.blogspot.com>.

Readers can visit Burleson's blog and decide for themselves if he is out of line in his dissent over IMB policies and actions. There are bigger issues at stake in this confrontation, however.

Due to Burleson's public disagreements with IMB trustees, an attempt was made to have Southern Baptist Convention messengers remove him from the board. That idea was dropped quickly and a Trustee Standards of Conduct and Trustee Responsibilities was adopted in March 2006.

No dissent tolerated



HAPPY THANKSGIVING — Although this issue of The Baptist Record may be delivered after the holiday, the staff of The Baptist Record wishes for you a belated Happy Thanksgiving as we prepare to celebrate the coming observance of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Code is obviously aimed directly at Burleson types, with such phrases as, "Individual IMB trustees must refrain from public criticism of Board approved action," and, "...trustees are to speak in positive and supportive terms as they interpret and report on actions by the Board."

Although IMB had existed for all these years without such a code regulating trustees — who of course are unpaid volunteers — it suddenly became necessary to bring them (particularly Burleson) into line.

When Burleson failed to heed the overly-broad wording of the Code as interpreted by board leadership and continued to dissent through his blog, he was censured and suspended.

Admittedly, the story is more complicated than the summary given above, but one does not have to possess knowledge of every detail to understand that something very disturbing has been done.

In their panic to silence anyone who holds a differing view of board decisions, the IMB trustees have served to reinforce critics of the Conservative Resurgence who have said all along that the current SBC leadership demands complete subservience, and that their authoritarian nature will not tolerate any variance from the party line.

One blogging IMB trustee does not a crisis portend, but the board felt it necessary to swiftly stifle him and his message. The board apparently feels that their actions and decisions are papal in nature, not subject to review or questioning but fully worthy of nothing less than "positive and supportive" public statements.

This flap could not have come at a worse time, just days ahead of the annual emphasis for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. What were they thinking? Trustees have only themselves to blame if the offering's goal is not reached this year and missionaries are made to suffer as a result.

Free speech and the right to dissent rest at the foundation of this great country, but they also have a storied role in the history of the Baptist faith. Now those hard-fought rights are being challenged by a group of autocrats who may have forgotten who put them in their positions of authority.

What say we, the people?

GUEST OPINION:



Make me feel at home

By Keith Manuel
Alexandria, La.

For the first time in my adult life, I have had to find a church home. Everywhere else I've gone I went as pastor, but now I look at the church from the pew instead of the pulpit.

On many Sundays, I've thought about one particular former church member. He is a vice-president for his global company. Only five companies worldwide do what his company does. He talks with major political leaders and meets with the top brass of the Army Corp of Engineers.

In his extensive travel, he makes several multi-million dollar deals per year. Yet on Sundays, you might find him cleaning a commode or vacuuming a soiled area of carpeting.

When I suggested we should change our terminology to refer to visitors as guests, he was the first to make those guests feel at home. He regularly left his circle of friends as soon as he spotted a guest he hadn't met. Introducing himself and anyone who was a member sitting nearby, he would engage the guest in friendly conversation.

Those who wondered why his Bible study class was growing when other classes were stagnant simply didn't watch him make a newcomer feel at

ease in the midst of strangers. He made people feel like they were his special guest.

As a guest in some churches, I've thought how they would benefit from one man like I described. One Sunday I walked in a church with my wife and three kids and no one even acknowledged our presence. I decided we would have a seat and see how long it would take before someone said hello.

No one ever did. The worst part was I was to be the guest preacher that evening. The pastor, whom I had never met, didn't have anyone looking out for a preacher type. I know I stood out. No one else had on a suit or carried a big preaching Bible.

In other churches we've attended, once we found our way inside — with complex church architecture that's not always easy — we had no idea where to go. No one was even available to direct us. Most churches do a decent job of helping guests on Sunday mornings.

However, is anyone thinking about mid-week services? When I had to stop someone to ask for help, I wondered if anyone was expecting a guest at all.

Maybe this is an indicator of one of our bigger problems. Since we have so many plateaued or declining churches, maybe no one expects a guest to come to worship.

My family and I have noticed one other big problem during our church search: finding the bathrooms. I have three kids. Someone always has to go. Please, don't hide the bathrooms; or, at least provide adequate signs.

Speaking of children, our churches need to do as good of a job spending a little money on background checks on workers as they do of teaching kids about Jesus. How are you going to communicate to me, a first-time guest, that you are protecting my children?

There are more elements to reaching people than just a clearly communicated message and powerful worship music. If a guest comes to our church, we should put our best foot forward to show them the love of Christ.

When we do the little things well, we eliminate the distractions Satan can use to nullify our message of hope in the Lord.

Manuel, former pastor of Beacon Church, Hattiesburg, is an evangelism associate on the Louisiana Baptist Convention's evangelism & church growth team. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

First of anti-God movies to open on Dec. 7

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — It's a fantasy universe where witches are good, the church is bad, and at the end of it all, God dies.

It's the world of author Philip Pullman's trilogy, His Dark Materials, and on Dec. 7 a movie based on the first book in that series, The Golden Compass, hits theaters. For weeks now, the movie has been the focus of e-mails from concerned Christians, curious if what they heard about it is true. In this instance — as even the truth-or-fiction website Snopes.com affirms — the rumors mostly are fact.

Pullman himself is not sure whether he's an atheist or an agnostic, but his own words leave little doubt that he has a strong distaste for Christianity, at least Christianity as he sees it.

The entire series has been dubbed the "anti-Narnia," with Pullman regularly expressing disdain for C.S. Lewis' fictional world and even once calling it "propaganda in the service of a life-hating ideology." He has sought to write a completely different fictional tale, and he has succeeded.

Pullman said in a 2001 interview, "I'm trying to undermine the basis of Christian belief," and two years later told another newspaper, "My books are about killing God."

Pullman has been more toned down in recent interviews, perhaps because New Line Cinema has invested more than \$150 million in the first installment and because it needs to be successful if the final two books are to make it to the big screen.

Launched in 1995, the book series has been wildly popular across the Atlantic and won several awards in the United Kingdom. In the U.S., Al Roker of NBC's Today Show recently even made The Golden Compass part of his children's book club.

Children are indeed reading it. During an interview with Roker, Pullman took videotaped questions from children about the The Golden Compass. He also took questions on the show's website, where one boy, an 8-year-old in Virginia, said he was reading the book with his class.

It is being sold nationwide in schools through Scholastic, which also is selling the other two books and claims the The Golden Compass is appropriate for grades four and up.

The movie itself focuses on a 12-year-old girl named Lyra and her daemon (pronounced "demon") — her soul in the form of a talking animal. Everyone in her world, in fact, has a daemon, which could range from a monkey to a lion. Early in the movie her friend Roger is kidnapped, and she sets out to find him.

The movie, rated PG-13, reportedly avoids using the word "church" and instead calls it the "Magisterium," a Roman



Catholic term. Additionally, in the second and third books "God" is regularly called the "Authority." The book and movie gets its name from a golden device that can, according to the books, determine truth itself.

In fact, the most anti-religious elements are found not in the first book but in the latter two. Movie director Chris Weitz has said some of the more controversial ideas have been removed from The Golden Compass to make it more palatable for the public. Weitz said his goal is to make sure controversial scenes and dialogue, critical to the plot, are included in any future movies.

"The whole point, to me, of ensuring that The Golden Compass is a financial success is so that we have a solid foundation on which to deliver a faithful, more literal adaptation of the second and third books," he said Nov. 14 on an MTV movie blog.

If that's the case, then the next two movies could be even more controversial. For instance:

- In the second book in the trilogy, The Subtle Knife, one of the main characters, Will, is told he possesses "the one weapon in all the universes," a magical knife that can "defeat the tyrant." That tyrant, he is told, is "The Authority. God."

- In The Amber Spyglass, the third and final book of the series, Will is told (by two fall-

en, homosexual angels, no less) that The Authority has many names, "God, the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty."

These were names God "gave himself" even though "he was never the creator." Instead, Will is told, the Authority simply was the first angel formed out of "Dust" and thereafter God proceeded to tell "those who came after him that he had created them."

- In another scene in The Amber Spyglass, one of the homosexual angels tells Will that churches "tell their believ-

ers that they'll live in Heaven, but that's a lie." Instead, believers go to a "prison camp."

- In one of the final chapters of The Amber Spyglass, an ex-nun named Mary tells Will and Lyra, "The Christian religion is a very powerful and convincing mistake, that's all." Mary also tells them that after she learned there was no God, she soon discovered that "physics was more interesting anyway."

"I don't think it's a reach to say that faith and enjoyment are antithetical in Pullman's worldview," Adam Holz, associate editor of Focus on the Family's Plugged In, told Baptist Press. "He seems to say that it's impossible to have a life of joy, of pleasure, and be a member of the church."

Pullman's biggest contentions with Christianity specifically and religion in general are the atrocities committed over the centuries in God's name.

"[I]f there is a God and he is as the Christians describe him, then he deserves to be put down and rebelled against," Pullman told the Telegraph newspaper in 2002. "As you look back over the history of the Christian church, it's a record of terrible infamy and cruelty and persecution and tyranny. How they have the bloody nerve to go on [the BBC's] Thought for the Day and tell us all to be good when, given the slightest chance, they'd be hanging the rest of us and flogging the homosexuals and persecuting the witches."

Holz said he's concerned about the books' impact on children.

"Not only has the story got a deeply anti-Christian component to it, but [Pullman is] aiming that story at children who may not have the discernment to notice or understand the message he's delivering," Holz said. "I think Christians need to be aware of where he is coming from. Even if they tone down the anti-church references in all the movies, we're concerned that it's still going to lead people back to the books, because it's going to make people curious."

Looking back

10 years ago

Broadman & Holman, the publishing arm of the Baptist Sunday School Board, becomes the largest publisher of Spanish Bibles sold through trade stores, with Spanish Bible sales comprising 36% of Bible sales.

20 years ago

In response to the trends that are restricting opportunities for traditional missionaries to enter many foreign countries, the Foreign Mission Board considers a proposal to send professionals into restricted countries to work as teachers or technologists while living a Christian witness.

50 years ago

Two hundred twenty-six decisions for Christ mark the closing Youth Rally service of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, with many deeming the sixth annual service the best to date, with overflow crowds and many being turned away from Jackson's City Auditorium.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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NOVEMBER 22, 2007

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You CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (*I have sinned.*)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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CELEBRATING WHAT YOU MISSED

As we draw closer to Thanksgiving, we generally become more and more conscious of the blessings in our lives. Usually a blessing count covers the range of things, stuff, and relationships that are good, healthy, and enjoyable. Most of us spend very little time giving thanks for the things that we missed.

Recently, I celebrated a rather mild, toned-down anniversary. Well, it was an anniversary of a sort because for over 40 years there has been a Canton Flea Market that I have missed. They tell me the Canton Flea Market takes place twice a year. It is a big deal. Every time it comes to town, one or several people ask me if I am going, and someone invariably expresses shock that I have never been. Still I have resisted, or I guess it could be more accurately stated that I have found better things to do. I am not anti-Canton Flea Market or any other flea market. It is just that everybody that I have ever talked to who went talks about the problems in parking, the horrendous crowds that pack the streets, and the unbearable heat or rain you have to endure to look at piles and piles of stuff. I know it is good stuff, but still it is stuff. For the most part it is the kind of stuff that I would not want if I saw it. I am not into



Directions

**Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**

quilts, doilies, horses that hang in trees, or artificial flower arrangements. I think they are all great, but I just don't need them, and so I paused a few minutes on that Thursday morning of the Canton Flea Market to say, "Thank You Lord that I am not there."

On a far more serious note, Thanksgiving is a great time to pause and thank God for the many, many things that you did not experience or you did not have over the past year. Just think about it and look at your job. If you still have a job and you were able to work all through the year, that is a great thing. Before you complain about your job and fuss about having to get up and go to work, it might not be bad to talk with one of those folks who have no work to go to and see what that feels like. If you didn't lose your job this year, give thanks!

Look at your health and don't evaluate the aches or pains but rather look at the unending array of maladies that did not come your way. I just got to thinking and realized that

over the past year I did not have a heart attack. I developed no form of cancer. I did not have a detached retina. I did not break a bone, and the only hearing loss that I experienced is selective and only with certain people. I had no pneumonia, no stroke, no pulsed muscle, no strained back, no ear or toothache, no nosebleed, no sprained ankle, and no significant pains or problems. However, at the same time I can recall either complaining about or at least thinking about complaining about the high pollen count that would stop my head up as the seasons changed from winter to spring or summer to fall.

Then I got to thinking about all of the miles that I have driven and the hours that I have spent looking at the world through a windshield. I thought about all of the things that did not happen over this past year. I did not have a wreck. I was close a few times, but I never ran out of gas. I never had a flat.

Then I thought about the

storms that did not come. I remembered the one that came to Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana in 2005 creating the largest natural disaster in the history of our country. I wondered if anybody in the 200 years prior to Katrina ever paused to give thanks to God for the big, big storms that did not come to touch their lives. It is a good lesson to learn that if we think storms are bad, giving thanks for the storms that don't come is thanks worthy.

For those of us who have difficulty looking at the things that did not happen and giving thanks, let me try to help in another way. If you were without electric power for an hour or a day this year, you probably ought to give thanks for the days and hours that the power never even blinked. While every meal that I sit down to eat may not be gourmet quality or even the food my taste buds would like at the moment, I cannot remember any time that I was hungry and could not get some food. We are so blessed here in America that we forget to thank God for all of the bad things that we don't have. Why not take a moment right now and thank God for all of the blessings He has sent your way, and then take time to thank Him for all of the blessings you experienced because of the things He kept away.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

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May 22-27, Gaither Fest - Gatlinburg, TN
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New starts having 'cultural implications'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Denominational growth in America has reached a plateau and in many cases has declined, but one would get the wrong idea to think the evangelical church is dying in the United States. A new study finds just the opposite.

Dallas-based Leadership Network in cooperation with the director of LifeWay Research have uncovered what they describe as striking changes in the number and type of new churches started in the United States that promise profound cultural implications for the future.

"While much of the North American church is in decline, a surprising number and increasingly diverse group of new churches are being started in innovative ways," said Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research, the research arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"These churches are causing many Americans to reconsider churches they have rejected and to re-think what church is," Stetzer said. "I anticipate that as cultures change, through the inevitable shift of time, migration and other means, even more churches will be born that reach people from these new cultural contexts."

The State of Church Planting USA study was based on interviews with more than 100 leaders from a range of different denominations, 200 church-planting churches and some 45 church-planting networks. Stetzer, who headed up the project, said the results surprised him in many respects.

"Church planting has grown in its scope, diversity and impact," Stetzer said. "North American churches, networks and denominations are making church planting a growing priority. Such emphases push the church closer toward a movement, where churches plant churches that plant churches across North America and the world."

Dave Travis, managing director at Leadership Network, observed, "Most church-planting studies tend to look at either a very narrow slice of church planting or developments on a global scale. In commissioning this study, our goal was to review the current state of U.S. church-planting efforts and begin to assess what today's reality means for the next generation of planters."

Key findings of the six-months-long effort include the following:

- Interest in church planting is growing rapidly. The pace of church planting has accelerated dramatically in recent years. A simple Google search on the term "church planting," for example, now returns over 1 million hits. While only two mainstream books were published on church planting from 1996 to 2002, no fewer than 10 have been released in the last five years, with several more on the horizon. Equally important, church planting has become a preferred ministry option, with denominations and individual churches reporting that many of their "best and brightest" leaders are pursuing church planting as a primary ministry focus.

- Local churches and church-planting networks are driving the trend. Historically, church planting has been a denominationally driven activity. Today, much of the initiative is centered at the local level. Many of the country's most vibrant congregations see church planting as one of their central purposes. "Church-planting networks" — loose affiliations of churches that may or may not be tied by denomination but do share a commitment to launching new like-minded congregations — also are at the forefront of the movement. As a result, denominational offices increasingly are taking an equipping role rather than directing local congregational efforts.

- "Affinity" strategies dominate. Church planters once based their efforts on geography, with a goal of placing new churches in "unserved" communities and areas. However, as Travis noted, "Through this study, we learned that most successful church planters today are specialists who emphasize a particular style of worship or a specific demographic. For example, they may exclusively plant house churches or ethnic churches — or perhaps build purpose-driven, seeker or missional churches. The trend toward specialization is likely to continue as more tools and resources that serve specific types of planting strategies are developed."

- Survival and success are markedly greater than realized. Observers have long assumed that most church plants fail within the first year -- as many as 80-

90% by some estimates. Research reveals a very different picture, suggesting that 68% of the roughly 4,000 churches planted each year are still functioning four years later. These new churches may not yet be self-sufficient, but they otherwise are alive, and many are thriving.

What do these results mean for the future of the U.S. church? Travis said he is hopeful "that this study and the growing number of outstanding church planting conferences and resources will inspire a new wave of planters in the years ahead. That would be very good news indeed. Launching vibrant new congregations is often a more feasible and more fruitful strategy than attempting to revitalize struggling congregations."

In the Southern Baptist Convention, the North American Mission Board holds the assignment of resourcing church-planting work. In 2006, Southern Baptists started 1,458 new congregations, more than half of which were ethnic or African American. For resources and more information about Southern Baptist church planting work, visit NAMB's church-planting website at www.churchplantingvillage.net.

The four-part State of Church Planting USA study and a podcast interview with Ed Stetzer of LifeWay Research and Dave Travis of the Leadership Network can be downloaded at www.leadnet.org/churchplanting.

Bibliocipher

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G RGU MEGZ AFGVYLM

DX TGGSWLEFYLL; PFU

DX LWFL PKY FGM EWU

TKGD MEYY.

HLPSD LWQMX-FWFY:

TWOY

Clue: M = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Five:Thirty-One.

Evangelist Junior Hill falls ill

MOBILE, Ala. (BP and local reports) — Evangelist Junior Hill fell ill and was unable to complete his sermon at the Alabama Baptist State Convention's annual meeting Nov. 12, although a check-up at the local hospital ruled out any heart problems and he was allowed to return home.

A regular pulpit guest in Mississippi, Hill was one of the featured speakers a few weeks ago at the 2007 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in Jackson.

The popular preacher was at the end of his sermon at Cottage Hill Church in Mobile when he became weak. "He held his hand to his head and said, 'I'm going to have to stop now. I don't feel so well,' and he had to be helped away to sit down," said Jennifer Davis Rash, managing editor of The Alabama Baptist newspaper.

Hill then was taken to a hospital. Hill himself thought the episode could have been blamed on exhaustion, being hot, and possible exposure to a virus the day before, Rash said. He had preached in Florida the previous day where he was in the presence of someone with a virus.

Hill, who has been in the ministry more than 50 years, is based in Hartselle, Ala. Just last year he published his autobiography, They Call Him Junior.

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MS POSITIONS

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HARRISVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH, Simpson Association, seeking a full-

time minister of youth/activities director. Resumes should be sent to Harrisville Baptist Church, attn: search committee, P. O. Box 308, Harrisville, MS 39082.

SEEKING PART-TIME MINISTER OF STUDENTS. Those interested in this position or the interim position should contact Pineview Baptist Church, Clinton, MS. Phone 601-924-7677. Fax resumes to (601) 924-8378, email pineviewbc@bellsouth.net.

TRADITIONAL, GROWING SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH near Memphis, seeking a full-time student minister. Must be spiritually-mature and self-motivated. Requires good communication skills, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to work well with others.

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MINISTER OF STUDENTS: Southside Baptist Church in Andalusia, Alabama is accepting resumes for the full-time position of Minister of Students. This position is responsible

for the College, High School, and Middle School students. Please send resumes to Minister of Students Search Committee, c/o, Mike Blocker, 1213 West Bypass, Andalusia, Alabama 36420.

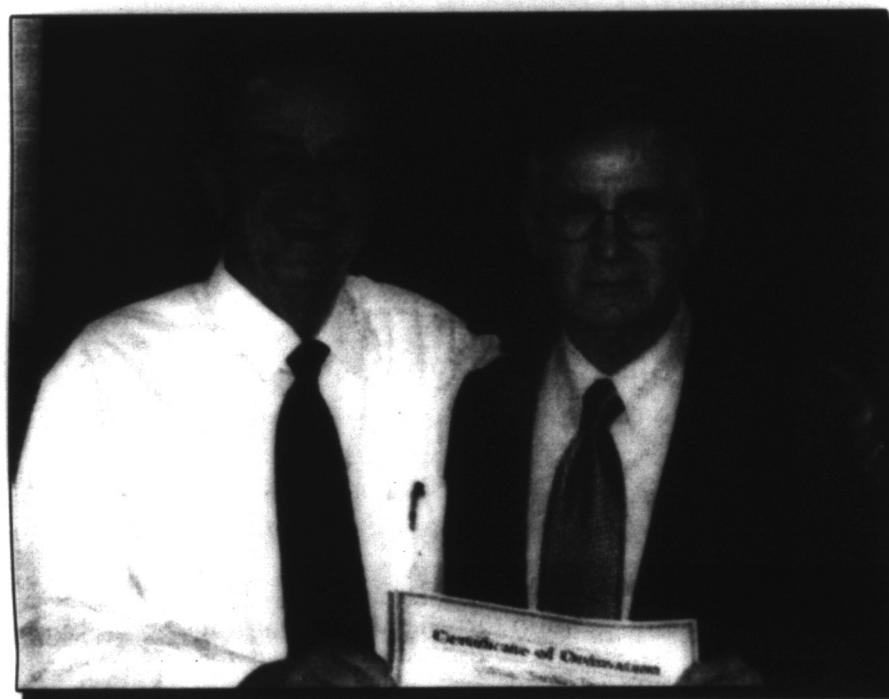
COUNTY LINE BAPTIST CHURCH, Crystal Springs, 20 miles South of Jackson, is looking for an individual interested in leading music service involving praise band & choir. Please send resume to Attn: music search committee, P.O. Box 578, Crystal Springs, MS 39059.

CRAWFORD BAPTIST CHURCH, MOBILE, Alabama; seeking a senior pastor who is an experienced leader with 5 years of ministry experience, possesses college & seminary degrees, has strong leadership skills, skilled in expository preaching style and a strong supporter of the Baptist Faith and message. Send resumes to Benny Johnston, 4500 Harvest Blvd., Semmes, Alabama 36575, email Bjohns7467@aol.com.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Deacon Ordination, Dumas Church, Dumas



2. Deacon Ordination, Ethel Church, Attala County



3. Noteburning, Montgomery Church, Lincoln Association



4. Celebrating 100 years, Beulah Church, Lexington

1. Dumas Church, Dumas, ordained Bobby Bailey as deacon Oct. 21. Shown are Nancy Bailey, Bailey, pastor Scott Hudson, and DeWayne Orman.

2. Ethel Church, Attala County, ordained Mickey Burns and Jim Vandiver as deacons. Shown are Burns and Vandiver.

3. Montgomery Church, Lincoln Association, held a note-burning ceremony Feb. 18, leaving the church debt-free. Shown are Charles Moak, Wayne McCarty, pastor Mike McKee, Hyland Brumfield, and J.C. Vaughn.

4. Beulah Church, Lexington, celebrated 100 years of ministry Sept. 23. Shown is deacon Billy Gilmore reading a proclamation from Gov. Haley Barbour.

5. Petal-Harvey Church, Petal, held a deacon ordination Sept. 30. Shown, from left, are Jimmy Gardner, Clay Palmer, pastor Tracey Hippis, and Gary Woods.

6. The GAs of Navilla Church, McComb, held a bike-a-thon Oct. 27 and raised \$460 for World Hunger. GAs participating included Hailey Biggart, Carrie Nimon, JonAvery Jenkins, Madison Fortenberry, Kathaleena Landry, Lakin Didon, Sarah Fortenberry, Allie Summers, and Katelyn Brown. Shown are some of the GAs.

7. New Hope Church, Foxworth, held a tent revival, Oct. 21-25, with four professions of faith and one joining by letter. Shown are members of the church who helped set up the revival's tent.

8. Edwards Church, Edwards, held a dedication service for Operation Shoe Box Nov. 11, with 50 boxes prepared. Shown are Linda Montgomery and Haylee Thompson.

9. The Master's Hands puppet ministry from Tangipahoa Church, Summit, will perform From the Manger to the Cross at Eddiceton Church, Eddiceton, Dec. 1, 6:30 p.m.; Miracle Lighthouse Church, Magnolia, Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m.; Salem Church, Tylertown, Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m.; and Tangipahoa Church, Summit, Dec. 9, 6:45 p.m.

10. First Church, Newton, is hosting This Hope in concert Nov. 28, 6 p.m. A love offering will be received.



5. Deacon Ordination, Petal-Harvey Church, Petal



6. GA Bike-a-thon, Navilla Church, McComb



7. Tent Revival, New Hope Church, Foxworth



8. Operation Shoe Box, Edwards Church, Edwards



9. Puppet Ministry, Tangipahoa Church, Summit



JUST FOR THE RECORD



11. Parent-Child Dedication, Big Level Church, Wiggins



12. Deacon Ordinations, Highland Church, Natchez



13. Deacon Ordinations, Southside Church, Aberdeen



14. Veteran's Day, First Church, Foxworth

11. Big Level Church, Wiggins, held its parent-child dedication Sept. 16. Shown are some of the participants.

12. Highland Church, Natchez, ordained Ben Wyles and John Kammerdiener as deacons recently. Shown are Sharon Wyles, Kammerdiener, Sherry Kammerdiener, and pastor Paul Southerland.

13. Southside Church, Aberdeen, held a deacon ordination service Aug. 25. Shown, from left, are Bob Cook, Robert Doss, pastor Dennis Sullivan, and Hubert Guin.

14. First Church, Foxworth, celebrated Veteran's Day with a special recognition of veterans, with each veteran receiving a patriotic boutonniere, a bookmark with a cross in a penny, and a certificate of recognition. Shown are the veterans and the Junior ROTC color guard.

15. Hurricane Creek Church, Sandy Hook, licensed Justin Fortenberry to the gospel ministry Oct. 14. Shown are Fortenberry and pastor Curtis Roland.

16. Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, celebrated homecoming Oct. 28, with dinner on the grounds following the morning worship service. Shown are some of the participants.

17. Lakeshore Church, Jackson, is presenting its annual drive-through Nativity Dec. 7 and 8, 6-8 p.m. Shown are members of the cast.

18. Holly Springs Church, Foxworth, will hold its Hanging of the Green Nov. 25, 10 a.m. Ron Jordan, pastor.

19. Algoma Church, Algoma, is presenting its 16th annual drive-through nativity Dec. 7 and 8, 6-9 p.m., rain or shine.

20. Crossgates Church, Brandon, is presenting A Crossgates Christmas Dec. 7, 7 p.m., and Dec. 8 and 9, 3:30 and 7 p.m. Complimentary tickets are available online at www.crossgates.org or at (601) 824-2775.

21. The Providentials will be in concert at **New Hope Church, Foxworth**, Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m. A love offering will be taken.

22. First Church, Columbus, held its 175th Anniversary Celebration Oct. 6-7. Former pastors Joe McKeever and Bobby Douglas brought the messages during the two-day celebration. Shawn Parker, pastor.



15. Fortenberry licensed, Hurricane Creek Church, Sandy Hook



16. Homecoming, Main Street Church, Hattiesburg



17. Drive-through Nativity, Lakeshore Church, Jackson

23. Grandview Church, Pearl, will present the Hanging of the Green Nov. 25, 6:30 p.m.; a Christmas concert by Pearl High School's Chamber Singers, Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m.; a Christmas cantata Dec. 16, 10:30 a.m.; and a Lottie Moon presentation Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m.

24. Holly Church, Alcorn Association, recently held a Harvest Time, with a high attendance in Sunday School of 210, and 15 decisions for Christ made.

25. The Women on Mission of Sunrise Church, Petal, will sponsor Festival of Trees Dec. 8, 3-9 p.m., including



**MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS**

themed trees, the Coca-Cola Santa truck, hay ride, fun jumps, and refreshments. Donations accepted for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

COLLEGE NEWS

- The annual Bobby Halford Holiday Baseball Camp and showcase for youth ages 7-17 will be conducted Dec. 27-29 on the William Carey University campus in Hattiesburg. The hours are 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on December 27-28, and 9 a.m.-12 p.m. on December 29. Cost is \$100, which includes insurance, camp T-shirt, and two noon meals. Instructors include Carey coaches and area scouts under the direction of Coach Halford. For more information, call the baseball office, (601) 318-6110, or the office of external relations, (601) 318-6192, or write Bobby Halford Baseball Camp, William Carey University, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Hattiesburg, MS 39401, or email bhalford@wmcarey.edu.
- Daniel Edney, a physician and Christian radio talk show host of On Call, will speak at the second Christian Leadership Lecture at William Carey University December 3 at 9:30 a.m. in the Smith Auditorium on the Hattiesburg campus. Edney will represent leadership in the health care field. The public is invited to attend the free lecture. For more information call (601) 318-6192.
- Dedication ceremonies for the first two new residence halls constructed on the Hattiesburg campus of William Carey University in more than 40 years took place Nov. 15. Opened in August to satisfied students, the residence halls were named Byrd Hall (for women) and Braswell Hall (for men).



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

BAPTISTS & DISSENT

Editor:

Principled dissent is a long-cherished hallmark of democracy — and Baptists. Early in Baptist life, independent Baptist newspapers were born to share information about Kingdom work, and those newspapers have also been an effective check and balance on the conduct of Baptist leaders and how they spend Baptist money. Baptist Press was also created with those roles in mind.

The history of the Southern Baptist Press Association is titled, Contending for the Right to Know, for this is what your Baptist editors did. Historian Walter Shurden titled his short history of Southern Baptists, Not A Silent People. Indeed, we have not been the quiet sort.

Our history makes the recent action of the Board of Trustees of the International Mission Board (IMB) most upsetting to me. The IMB board has chosen to suspend a trustee, Oklahoma pastor Wade Burleson, for the next four meetings.

Of what is Wade Burleson guilty? He is guilty of principled dissent (view his blog at <http://kerussocharis.blogspot.com>). He is guilty of doing what Baptist Press is no longer capable of doing, for it is no longer an independent voice. What really bothers me is that the IMB Board of Trustees is in essence saying that there can be no dissent from the official party line.

Burleson's suspension for speaking his mind is a dangerous precedent for Southern Baptists. It is a blatant attempt to dodge accountability and further consolidate control in the hands of a few power brokers. That should concern us all.

Carl M. White, pastor
Highland Church, Meridian

- First Church, Ridgeland, has called B.J. Bennett as pastor effective Nov. 11. Bennett has served as pastor in churches in Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Georgia, and most recently served First Church, Indianola. He holds degrees from Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He is married to the former Nancy Carol Stegall and has two daughters, one son, and one grandson.

- Antioch Church, House, has called Ray Spence as pastor. He comes with his wife Amanda, sons Cody and Gavin, and daughter Jana.

STAFF CHANGES



2. Spence and family, Antioch Church, House

Bangladesh suffers second major disaster this year



ONE-TWO PUNCH — Hundreds of flood victims in Dhaka, Bangladesh, wait for hours to receive food and medical supplies after devastating monsoon floods hit the country in August. Now a deadly cyclone has delivered another blow to the already-reeling country, one of the poorest in the world. (BP photo)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — Cyclone Sidr struck the southern coast of Bangladesh Nov. 15, with 155 mph winds and gusts of up to 190 mph. More than 1,000 people are known to have been killed as a 16-feet-tall tidal surge flattened bamboo and tin houses in 15 districts along the coast.

Government officials had evacuated at least 650,000 people to cyclone shelters or government buildings. They estimate the final death toll could go as high as 10,000, because millions of people live in isolated fishing villages throughout the low-lying coastal terrain, which is extremely susceptible to storm surges.

At least 60% of the trees in the area have been uprooted, and debris on roads and in rivers will make it difficult to reach affected communities, the Associated Press reported. Power and communications also were knocked out in the capital, Dhaka.

Baptist Global Response and Baptist partners in the region

anticipate responding to human needs in the area once an assessment of the situation can be made, said Jim Brown, U.S. director for Baptist Global Response, a Southern Baptist international development and relief organization.

"The immediate needs are likely to consist of food, water, temporary shelter and emergency medical needs," Brown said. "In the long term, sheltering will be an issue, as will the need for clean, potable water. Widespread flooding could spread waterborne diseases and raise serious sanitation concerns. Crisis counseling also is likely to be needed and should be woven throughout all relief responses."

Millions of Indians, Nepalis, and Bangladeshis were affected in August by monsoon rains that brought what the United Nations called "the worst flooding in living memory" to southern Asia. In 1970, an estimated 500,000 people died when a cyclone hit Bangladesh, while an estimated 138,000 people died in a cyclonic tsunami in 1991.

2008 Doctrine Study now available through LifeWay

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — What does it mean to be made in God's image? What is the free agency of man? What do Baptists believe about the social order? These and other topics are explored in Baptist Doctrine Study 2008: The Baptist Faith & Message.

Published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, the six-session study examines the foundational doctrines, or teachings, of the Baptist faith as reflected in the 21 articles of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

In addition to exploring such Christian doctrines as the doctrines of God, man, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the church, the BF&M study incorporates historical and contemporary illustrations and provides guided applications.

Three denominational leaders served as authors of the study: Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville; Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Seminary; and R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

The first section of the doctrine study examines the Word of God. The first article of the Baptist Faith & Message outlines the specific doctrines of the Bible and proclaims the Bible to be a "perfect treasure of divine instruction." The study explains that all Scripture, as God's revelation of Himself to mankind, is trustworthy and stands as a testimony to Christ, who is Himself "the focus of divine revelation."

Divine revelation

The doctrinal study shows how the Bible is authoritative, infallible, inerrant, sufficient and eternal. "The Baptist Faith & Message does not begin with the Scriptures by mere accident or custom," the authors of the study write, noting that all doctrines from the study are based on the Bible.

God is infinite, holy

The second article in the Baptist Faith & Message outlines the doctrine of God, stating that there is only one living and true God who is "an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe."

The Baptist Faith & Message explains that God reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with "distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being."

God is Triune, and the doctrine of the Trinity stands as an essential principle of Christian truth. "Without this doctrine there is no true Christianity, for the Bible reveals that there is only one God and He is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," the authors write. "Biblical Christianity affirms one God in three persons."

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

The 2008 doctrinal study examines each aspect of the Trinity as mentioned in the Baptist Faith & Message.

"God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace," the Baptist Faith & Message's article 2A states. The doctrine study examines God's providential hand as seen in His care and protection, His provision and His moral structure of the universe.

"God's providence is seen in the unfolding purpose of God's grace," the authors write. "The record of history is a testimony to God's purpose and providence." The study describes the following attributes of God the Father: He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving and all-wise.

The Baptist Faith and Message



God also reveals Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ. "The full deity and full humanity of Christ are fundamental to true Christianity," the authors write. The doctrine study outlines the various aspects of Christ's life, birth, death, resurrection, ascension and return, with a key aim of teaching participants how to confront false teachings with vigor and truth.

The authors also explain terms such as "incarnation," "atonement," "propitiation," and "substitutionary." Guided responses pose reflective application questions such as, "Why do you believe in the resurrection of Christ?"

"Heretics and false teachers have always directed their attacks on the doctrines most closely connected with Jesus Christ," the authors explain. "We must be ready to defend the virgin birth of Christ, His full deity, His full humanity, His miraculous acts, His bodily resurrection, His victorious return, and the substitutionary character of His atonement -- as well as all the other biblical truths about Jesus Christ."

Compromise on the doctrine of Christ, the authors write, will be fatal to a Christian's witness and "subversive" to one's faith.

The Holy Spirit is described as the "Spirit of God,

fully divine." The Holy Spirit exalts Christ and convicts men of sin. Article 2C in the Baptist Faith & Message states, "At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ."

The authors recount the role of the Spirit in the creation of the Bible and how the Bible can simultaneously be the words of men and the Word of God.

"... [T]he Bible presents the process of inspiration — verbal plenary inspiration — as the Holy Spirit moving the human authors of Scripture to write exactly what He wanted them to write," the authors explain. "At the same time, the words the human authors wrote were the very words they wanted to write. This is because the Holy Spirit works within believers to accomplish His sovereign purposes."

The authors further note that the ministry of the Spirit includes convicting of sin, calling unbelievers to salvation, bringing regeneration, illuminating truth and sealing believers' salvation.

Man, the image of God

The study points out that both male and female were created in God's image as written in Genesis 1:27. The authors note that the image of God in human beings refers to their intellectual and reasoning ability, their dominion over all creation and their spiritual capacity (ability to fellowship with God).

When tempted, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and fell from innocence into sin. Once Adam sinned, the authors write, all humanity came under the condemnation of sin.

"Only God's plan of redemption allows us to have fellowship with God," the authors note. "By God's grace, demonstrated and made ours in Christ, we are restored to fellowship with God and are able to fulfill the purpose for which we were made."

The doctrine of salvation, God's purpose of grace and the church also are explored in the doctrine study. In the section on the church, the authors define the structure of the church and explain key terms like "bishop," "elder," "pastor," and "deacon."

The authors also write on baptism and the Lord's Supper. Believers' baptism by immersion in water, they note, pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, providing "a beautiful picture of our salvation and reminding us of His saving work."

Like baptism, the Lord's Supper is symbolic. "Baptists believe the Lord's Supper is not a sacrament but an ordinance," the authors write. The elements of the Lord's Supper symbolize Christ's atoning work and are observed as a congregation.

"When the local church celebrates the Lord's Supper, we proclaim the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ even as we anticipate His return, when the church will celebrate the wedding supper of the Lamb," the authors write. "Likewise, when the church celebrates baptism, we complete the picture Christ provided for us of a believer transformed by God's grace and power."

The doctrine study also addresses other aspects of the Baptist Faith & Message such as the Lord's Day, the Kingdom, last things (eschatology), evangelism and missions education, and stewardship.

The study ends with chapters on cooperation, the Christian and the social order, peace and war, religious liberty and the family.

LifeWay publishes a Baptist doctrine study for adults every year. The Southern Baptist Convention designates a week in April as the Baptist Doctrine Study week on the denominational calendar. The 2008 week is April 13-17. Churches, of course, may conduct the study any time they choose. It also can be studied individually. Baptist Doctrine Study 2008: The Baptist Faith & Message, is available through customer service at www.lifeway.com and (800) 458-2772 and from LifeWay Christian Stores at www.lifewaystores.com and (800) 233-1123.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

Nov. 6-19 2007

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Campbell's Labels for Education Reminder



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Kayla Bounds of Picayune delivered items to The Baptist Children's Village she collected at her school as her Senior project. Pictured (L-R) are Celeste Cade, BCV Public Relations Associate, and Kayla Bounds.



BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Make Up Your Minds

Matthew 7:13-29



Smith

By Alice Smith

Jesus said that each of us is faced with one decision in this life; either we choose for Him or against Him. His words are clear so there is no uncertainty concerning the specifics of the decision. If we are to enter the Kingdom of God, we must understand that the entrance is narrow, the path is difficult, and few will find it. If we choose the broad, undemanding way, we will travel blindly along to eternal destruction.

Jesus also warns us about false prophets who are masters at deceiving and who twist His words. He said we would recognize them by their fruit. Although their fruit may look ripe and delicious at first, it soon rots and falls off the tree

and is wasted. Have you seen people full of promise whose lives ended up empty and desolate because of the choices and decisions they made that were not of God?

Jesus said in John 15:5 (HCSB), I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.

Galatians 5:22 (HCSB) teaches, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. T. W. Hunt, in "The Mind of Christ," says that you must have all of these qualities in your life. All the words rolled up in one ... a package deal.

The way to guard against false teaching is to be passion-

ate about knowing Jesus. He wants to reveal Himself to us, and we must earnestly seek Him. As we yearn to know Him, we become more like Him. We find ourselves becoming more loving, patient, and forgiving as we turn to Him, consistently, in prayer.

God's Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world not as a conquering king, but as a little baby. As a pre-adolescent He astounded the priests in the Temple with His knowledge and His questions. We know He was tempted in all things just as we are, but He did not sin. He lived perfectly. At the age of thirty, He began a ministry that was to last just three years; a ministry that would transform people and history. Nothing was ever the same again. He was honest and courageous. He was gentle and strong. He said that to know Him was to know God. He was a person who felt pain and suffering, but demon-

strated perfect love. He forgave sins — and He could do that because He was God. We must see Christ's sufferings on the cross, His torment as He dies for you and me for sins he did not commit. He was buried. He rose bodily from that grave and walked among us, telling us that He would come again, and those of us who trust in Him will dwell with Him in heaven forever.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven." And how do we know our Father's will? By accepting Jesus as our Savior. When we choose Him, our chief desire is to be obedient to His teachings, and He shows us the way to live.

Have you built your life on the firm foundation of Jesus so that the storms of life and the false teachings of the world cannot cause it to collapse? Have you chosen to believe the words of Jesus and act on them

so you won't be like the foolish man who puts his trust on the shifting sands of our materialistic society?

Without Jesus' dying for our sins, there would be a vast chasm between us and God. He is the bridge. Do you, as I, shake your head in puzzlement that God would want to save such a wretch? Do you hang your head in shame that your sinfulness would require such sacrifice?

But Jesus came to free us from guilt. He wants us to have an abundant life. You can experience His freedom. He promises eternal life. All you have to do is believe that Jesus is God's Son and accept Him as your Savior. It sounds easy, but it may be the most difficult thing you will ever do. Belief is difficult. Faith must be exercised.

I know who He is. I have experienced Him. Claim Him for yourself and be filled with the sacrificial love of Jesus Forever and Ever and Ever...

Smith is a member of First Church, Jackson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

On Mission

Matthew 27:35-37, 45-50; 28:5-10, 18-20

By Michael Smith

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16 NIV). Paul's bold declaration to the church in Rome expresses his unwavering conviction that salvation is available through Jesus' sinless life, atoning death, and victorious resurrection. The Gospel is God's good news of salvation — the good news that God gave "his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NIV). The Gospel is also our message to the lost and hopeless world. Paul encapsulates the Good News in his first letter to the church in Corinth: "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the

Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NIV). This week's lesson passage focuses on the good news of God's salvation.

Jesus Died for Us (Matthew 27:35-37, 45-50)

God's powerful provision for salvation was necessitated by our need for salvation. God has provided for salvation from our sin because we need to be saved from the guilt and condemnation of our sin. Paul forcefully expounds the indictment against the sinful world: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God...For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:23; 6:23). We are all sinners and stand condemned before God because of our sin. The Gospel is God's means of fully condemning sin



Smith

and forgiving the sinner. How is this wonderful gift of forgiveness made available to wretched sinners like you and me? God fully condemned our sin and made provision for our forgiveness by sacrificing his Son on our behalf. God wielded his full and unrestrained wrath against sin on the cross. Jesus, our willing substitute, absorbed God's righteous judgment on our behalf when he was crucified on the cross. The Gospel is a cross-centered message! In a no-nonsense manner, Matthew conveys the profound reality of the cross: "When they had crucified him..." (Matthew 27:35 NIV). Matthew communicates in his vivid narrative the manner in which Jesus was cruelly crucified on a cruel cross. Jesus endured the suffering and the shame of the cross so that the unrighteous sinner might be made righteous before God. Paul adds to our comprehension of God's good news: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might

become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV).

Jesus Was Resurrected for Us (Matthew 28:5-10)

Our hope for eternal life is secured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The good news of God's salvation is that Jesus lives. Matthew's wonderful words of hope echo our victory in Jesus Christ: "He is not here; he has risen just as he said" (Matthew 28:6 NIV). The power of God to bring life to the spiritually dead is powerfully demonstrated by God's power to raise Jesus from the dead. You and I can delight in the assurance of our salvation because we know that Jesus lives. Jesus' resurrection from the dead grants us the assurance and the encouragement to press on. Jesus' resurrection is the substance of our faith and hope. Paul eloquently affirms the importance of the resurrection: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17 NIV). Because Jesus was resurrected for us, our faith is not in vain, and we have been delivered from the guilt and condemnation of our sin.

Jesus Expects our Service (Matthew 28:18-20)

The very same power that transformed you from a hopeless sinner to a precious saint of God is available to you as you go into your world to share the gospel. Jesus desires and demands that we would be witness to the Gospel in word and deed as we join together to be on mission with Jesus. As we allow the Gospel to define our purpose and shape our priorities, we can confidently be on mission with Jesus in the world trusting that indeed the presence and power of Jesus is at work in and through our lives (Matthew 28:18, 20). The unfortunate reality is that the power of the Gospel remains largely untapped because most Christians today are not consistently on mission with God. I challenge each of us to fully embrace Paul's conviction concerning the power of the Gospel and share the good news of God's salvation with the lost world.

Smith is pastor of Bethel Church, Monticello.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) type-written, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

**THE BAPTIST
Record**

IMB trustees hear statistics, plead for increased giving

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP) — God is moving in unprecedented ways around the world, and Southern Baptists face the challenge of joining their missionaries in "whatever it takes" to make disciples of all peoples, International Mission Board (IMB) trustees were told during their Nov. 6-7 meeting in Springfield, Ill.

Eighty-two new missionaries were appointed to overseas service in a ceremony held in conjunction with the 100th annual meeting of the Illinois Baptist State Association. Southern Baptists were challenged to make the same kind of sacrificial commitment the new workers are making, laying aside careers, families, and lifestyles to take the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to those who might never hear otherwise.

"We can look around the world and see God is doing something unprecedented in the history of the International Mission Board and its work," Gordon Fort, IMB vice president for overseas operations, told the trustees. "God is planting His church among peoples and in places never thought possible."

"Your missionaries are out there in hard places with their national Baptist partners, and they are seeing multitudes of people coming into the Kingdom and the church being planted for the first time in the history of many peoples."

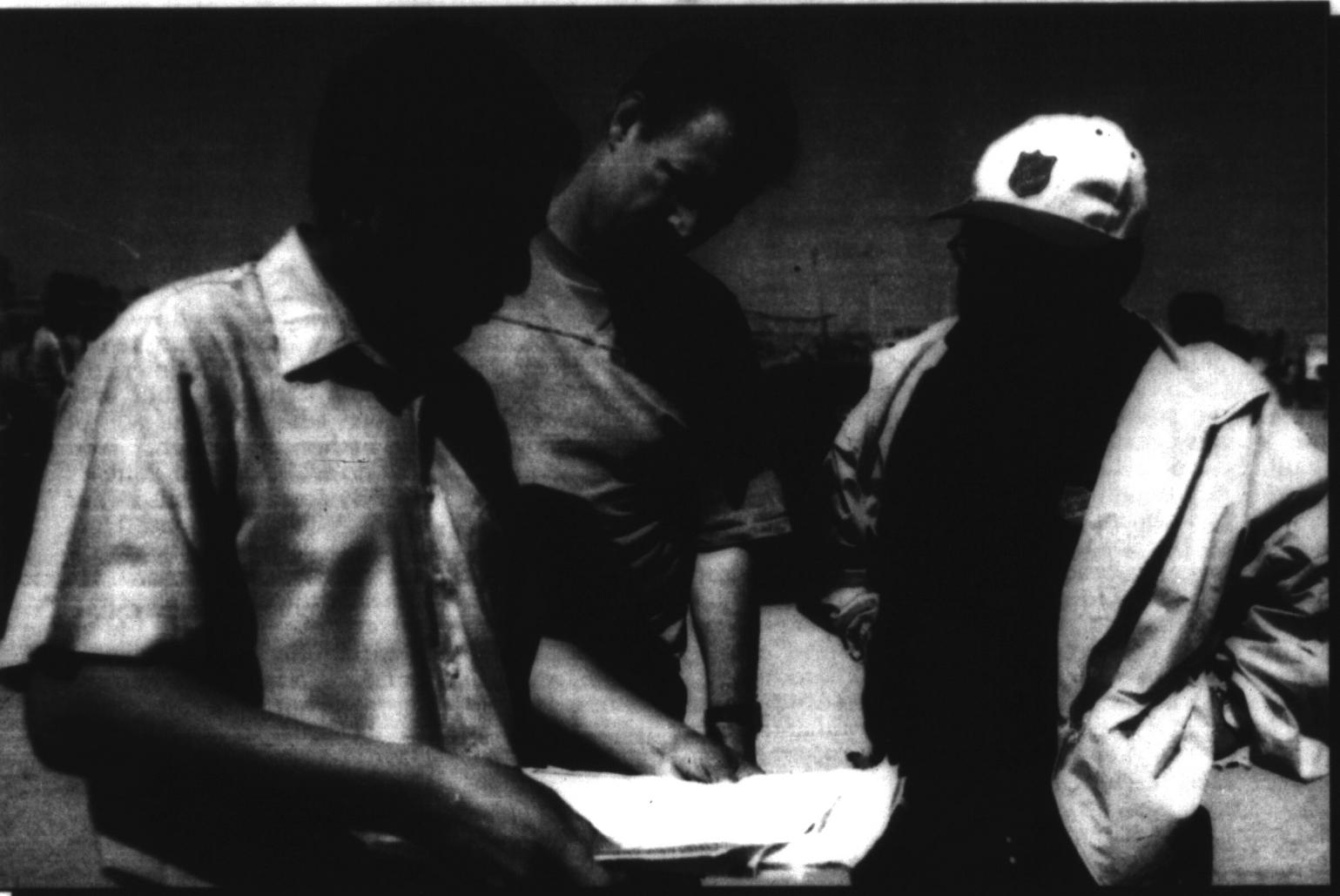
Global statistics

Fort, Scott Holste, associate vice president for research, and a team of trustees and overseas leaders delivered the board's annual statistical report, an array of numbers detailing advances in overseas work during the previous year that IMB President Jerry Rankin said is surprising even for an era in which great advances already have been made.

"I have been saying for a long time that there was more advance in fulfilling the Great Commission in the last decade of the 20th century than in 200 years of the modern missionary movement," Rankin told the trustees, "but as you listen to these reports, you will realize that there has been more advance in global evangelization since we entered the 21st century than in any of our lifetimes."

The report, covering calendar year 2006, showed that Southern Baptist overseas missionaries and their national Baptist partners:

- witnessed the number of reported baptisms top 600,000 for the first time.



HERE TO HELP — In Los Pollitos, Peru, Southern Baptist missionary Wayne Brinkley (center) meets with a local believer, Carlos (left), and an unnamed local relief worker to discuss relief efforts following the 8.0-magnitude earthquake that devastated the community Aug. 15. Mississippi Baptists have conducted two major mission trips to Peru in the past two months. (IMB photo)

- saw 25,497 churches planted, increasing the number of congregations worldwide to 157,890.

- implemented church-planting strategies among 1,134 people groups, including 100 people groups newly engaged with the Gospel.

- engaged 567,413 new believers and 1.2 million church members in discipleship training.

- enrolled a total of 222,604 church leaders in residential and nonresidential pastoral training programs.

"If you put 600,000 baptisms in the context of our daily lives, that means more than 1,640 people are being baptized each day — 68 every hour, more than one baptism every minute of every day, every day of the year," said Chuck McAlister, chairman of the trustees' overseas committee. "Our missionaries and their national Baptist partners started more than 68 churches per day. Isn't that exciting? God is moving!"

'Artificial ceiling'

In spite of great advances, however, 6,512 people groups — more than 3.3 billion souls — still have not heard the Gospel. IMB leaders have challenged Southern Baptists to add almost 2,700 more missionaries to the current total of about 5,300 to

address that need, but it will require serious sacrifice and a movement of the Holy Spirit, said A.C. Halsell, chairman of the trustees' finance committee.

"There is an overarching assumption on the budget that we Baptists will continue to give through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," Halsell said. "The flip side to that, however, is that this budget is limited by parameters that are nothing more than historical trends of giving."

"We all realize this budget is not big enough to support 8,000 missionaries. As we give, you and I, we must pray the Holy Spirit will work in our hearts, so we give in a way that busts through this artificial ceiling. If we don't, it's going to take us years to put 8,000 missionaries on the field."

"It doesn't need to take that long. The money is there. It's a matter of us responding to the Holy Spirit in our lives."

2008 budget highlights

David Stevenson, the board's treasurer, presented trustees with the 2008 IMB budget, which projects, among other things:

- a total budget of \$304.8 million, an increase of \$15.9 million (5.5%) over 2007.

- an \$11 million increase (5.4%) in support of field personnel, which provides for a net addition of 80 new missionaries.

- an additional \$1.48 million to foster church-planting movements worldwide.

The plan anticipates receiving \$106 million from Southern Baptist mission giving through the Cooperative Program, an increase of almost 3.8%. More than 54% of the budget — \$165 million — will depend on giving to this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

Remaining receipts are anticipated from investments, hunger and relief giving (which is spent exclusively for those ministries), and other income.

Also included are an increase of almost \$2.6 million for missionary salaries and additional funds to help missionaries in areas where dramatically falling dollar values have severely hurt their ability to provide for their families.

IMB finance officials project Southern Baptists will need to meet their \$165 million goal for the 2007 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering just to sustain ministry budgets funded by last year's record \$150 million offering.

Projected U.S. expenditures, at \$47 million, represent about 15.4% of the 2008 budget.

Missionaries and Lottie

Trustee Charles Fowler told trustees about his family's visit this past year with missionaries in an area of the world where great sacrifices must be made to serve.

"One of the most challenging aspects of that visit was when the missionaries gave their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, and gave more than \$23,000," Fowler said. "I was absolutely overwhelmed. At the time, I was serving as interim pastor of a church that averaged almost 200 people a week more than was gathered in that room, and that church's Lottie Moon offering was \$9,000."

"I went back and told those folks that my family was going to sacrifice for the offering that year, and that the church needed to give like our personnel on the field were giving. They moved their offering goal from \$9,000 to about \$20,000."

In other matters, the trustees also:

- voted in executive session to censure trustee Wade Burleson for violating the trustee code of conduct. The vote also suspended his participation in board business for the next

four meetings, at which time the suspension will be reviewed (a separate story on this action was released by Baptist Press Nov. 7).

- adopted a five-point statement of principles for contextualizing the Gospel in other cultural settings. The statement affirms the use of "bridges" from elements of host cultures to communicate Gospel truth and encouraged missionary vigilance that unbiblical concepts in a culture do not compromise "the whole unvarnished truth of the Gospel."

- approved a \$2 million expenditure from capital reserves to upgrade the board's capabilities in digital video production to HDTV format.

- heard a report that between Aug. 16 and Sept. 30, the board released more than \$1.14 million for 34 human needs projects. One project undertaken in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in southern Asia ministered to 8,550 people.

- were informed about the launch of a new Internet site, CommissionStories.com, which represents an important step toward making board-created multimedia resources available to churches and mission partners.

- voted to ask for a fresh study of compensation for missionaries who serve through the International Service Corps program.